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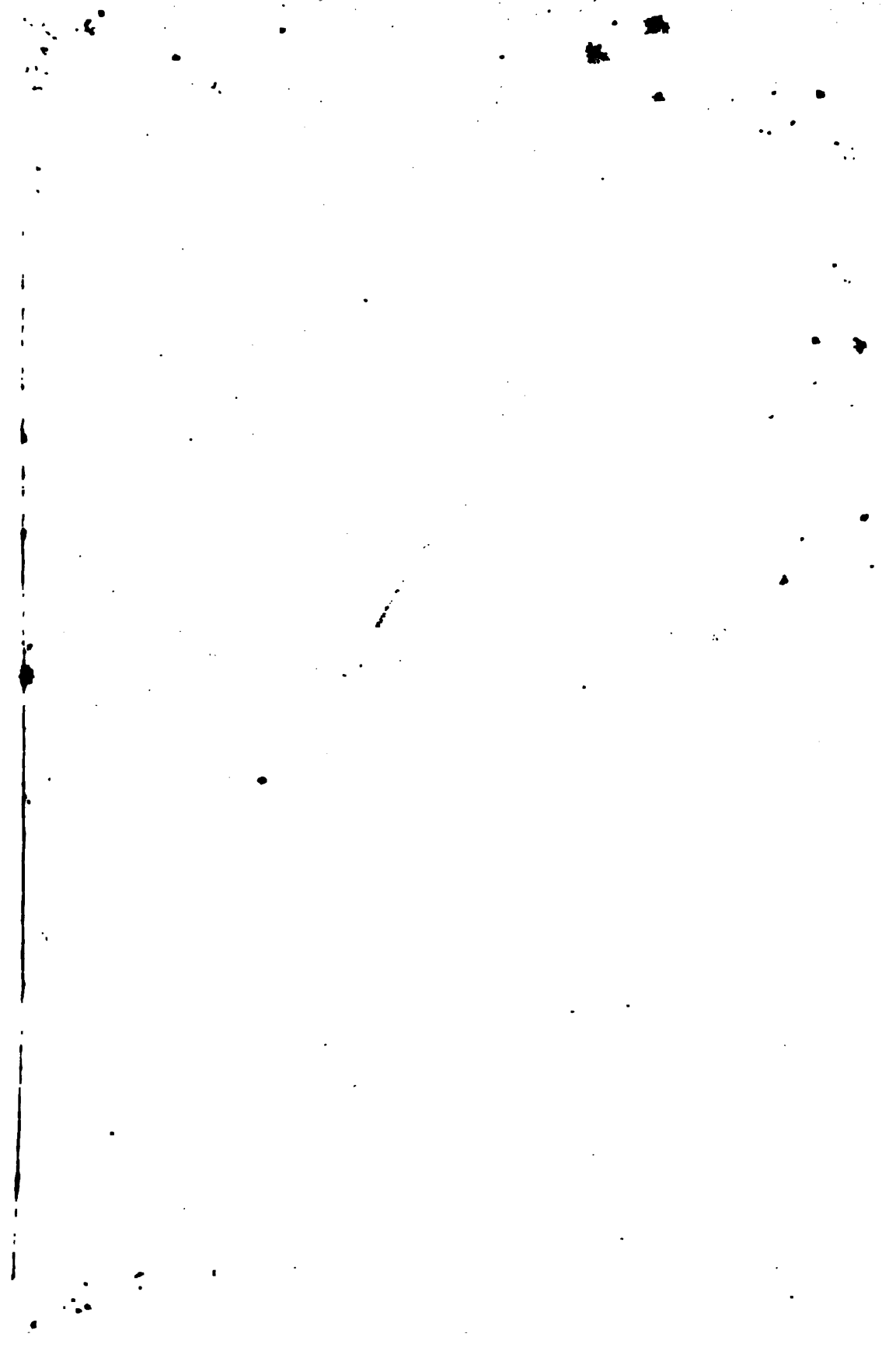
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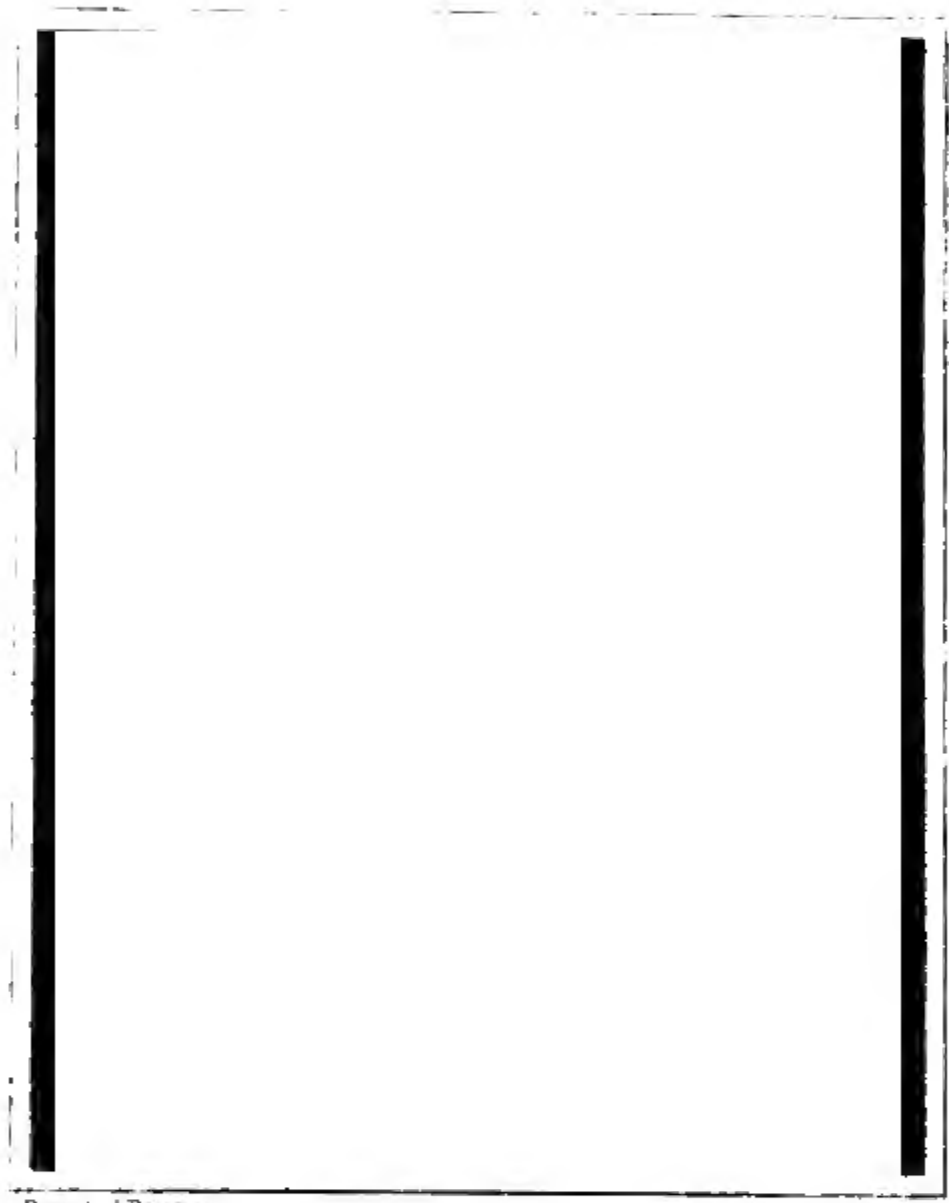
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Drawn by J. Thurston

Engraved by W. Pinson

GEOMETRICAL CORRELATIONS.

*From a Drawing in Cæsar's De Regimine Principis.
preserved in the Harleian Library.*

The
Canterbury Tales
AND
FAERIE QUEENE

&c. &c. &c.

EDITED FOR POPULAR PERUSAL WITH CURRENT ILLUSTRATIONS

AND EXPLANATORY NOTES

BY

D. LAING PURVES.



EDINBURGH
WILLIAM P. NIMMO.

THE
CANTERBURY TALES

AND

FAERIE QUEENE:

WITH

OTHER POEMS OF CHAUCER AND SPENSER.

*EDITED FOR POPULAR PERUSAL,
WITH CURRENT ILLUSTRATIVE AND EXPLANATORY NOTES,*

BY

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EDINBURGH:
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CONTENTS.

PREFACE,	PAGE v
--------------------	-----------

POEMS OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

LIFE OF CHAUCER,	PAGE 3	Chaucer's Tale of Sir Thopas,	PAGE 146
THE CANTERBURY TALES—		Chaucer's Tale of Melibœus,	149
The Prologue,	17	The Monk's Tale,	156
The Knight's Tale,	26	The Nun's Priest's Tale,	164
The Miller's Tale,	47	The Second Nun's Tale,	171
The Reeve's Tale,	54	The Canon's Yeoman's Tale,	177
The Cook's Tale,	59	The Manciple's Tale,	186
The Man of Law's Tale,	60	The Parson's Tale,	189
The Wife of Bath's Tale,	71	THE COURT OF LOVE,	200
The Friar's Tale,	83	THE CUCKOO AND THE NIGHTINGALE,	211
The Sompnour's Tale,	87	THE ASSEMBLY OF FOWLS,	215
The Clerk's Tale,	93	THE FLOWER AND THE LEAF,	224
The Merchant's Tale,	104	THE HOUSE OF FAME,	231
The Squire's Tale,	115	TROILUS AND CRESSIDA,	247
The Franklin's Tale,	122	CHAUCER'S DREAM,	274
The Doctor's Tale,	130	THE PROLOGUE TO THE LEGEND OF GOOD	
The Pardoner's Tale,	133	WOMEN,	281
The Shipman's Tale,	139	CHAUCER'S A. B. C.,	287
The Prioress's Tale,	144	MISCELLANEOUS POEMS,	289-292

POEMS OF EDMUND SPENSER.

LIFE OF SPENSER,	PAGE 295	THE SHEPHERD'S CALENDAR,	PAGE 555
THE FAERIE QUEEN,	305	THE RUINS OF TIME,	583
Book I. The Legend of Holiness,	310	PROSOPOPOLA: OR, MOTHER HUBBERD'S	
Book II. The Legend of Temperance,	365	TALE,	590
Book III. The Legend of Chastity,	408	MUOIOPOTMOS; OR, THE FATE OF THE BUT-	
Book IV. The Legend of Friendship,	444	TERFLY,	602
Book V. The Legend of Justice,	481	COLIN CLOUT'S COME HOME AGAIN,	607
Book VI. The Legend of Courtesy,	512	AMORETTI; OR, SONNETS,	616
The Two Cantos of Mutability,	543	EPITHALAMION,	620

PREFACE.

THE object of this volume is to place before the general reader our two early poetic masterpieces—The Canterbury Tales and The Faerie Queen; to do so in a way that will render their “popular perusal” easy in a time of little leisure and unbounded temptations to intellectual languor; and, on the same conditions, to present a liberal and fairly representative selection from the less important and familiar poems of Chaucer and Spenser. There is, it may be said at the outset, peculiar advantage and propriety in placing the two poets side by side in the manner now attempted for the first time. Although two centuries divide them, yet Spenser is the direct and really the immediate successor to the poetical inheritance of Chaucer. Those two hundred years, eventful as they were, produced no poet at all worthy to take up the mantle that fell from Chaucer’s shoulders; and Spenser does not need his affected archaisms, nor his frequent and reverent appeals to “Dan Geffrey,” to vindicate for himself a place very close to his great predecessor in the literary history of England. If Chaucer is the “Well of English undefiled,” Spenser is the broad and stately river that yet holds the tenure of its very life from the fountain far away in other and ruder scenes.

The Canterbury Tales, so far as they are in verse, have been printed without any abridgment or designed change in the sense. But the two Tales in prose—Chaucer’s Tale of Melibœus, and the Parson’s long Sermon on Penitence—have been contracted, so as to exclude thirty pages of unattractive prose, and to admit the same amount of interesting and characteristic poetry. The gaps thus made in the prose Tales, however, are supplied by careful outlines of the omitted matter, so that the reader need be at no loss to comprehend the whole scope and sequence of the original. With The Faerie Queen a bolder course has been pursued. The great obstacle to the popularity of Spenser’s splendid work has lain less in its language than in its length. If we add together the three great poems of antiquity—the twenty-four books of the Iliad, the twenty-four books of the Odyssey, and the twelve books of the Æneid—we get at the dimensions of only one-half of The Faerie Queen. The six books, and the fragment of a seventh, which alone exist of the author’s contemplated twelve, number about 35,000 verses; the sixty books of Homer and Virgil number no more than

37,000. The mere bulk of the poem, then, has opposed a formidable barrier to its popularity; to say nothing of the distracting effect produced by the numberless episodes, the tedious narrations, and the constant repetitions, which have largely swelled that bulk. In this volume the poem is compressed into two-thirds of its original space, through the expedient of representing the less interesting and more mechanical passages by a condensed prose outline, in which it has been sought as far as possible to preserve the very words of the poet. While deprecating a too critical judgment on the bare and constrained *précis* standing in such trying juxtaposition, it is hoped that the labour bestowed in saving the reader the trouble of wading through much that is not essential for the enjoyment of Spenser's marvellous allegory, will not be unappreciated.

As regards the manner in which the text of the two great works, especially of *The Canterbury Tales*, is presented, the Editor is aware that some whose judgment is weighty will differ from him. This volume has been prepared "for popular perusal;" and its very *raison d'être* would have failed, if the ancient orthography had been retained. It has often been affirmed by editors of Chaucer in the old forms of the language, that a little trouble at first would render the antiquated spelling and obsolete inflections a continual source, not of difficulty, but of actual delight, for the reader coming to the study of Chaucer without any preliminary acquaintance with the English of his day—or of his copyists' days. Despite this complacent assurance, the obvious fact is, that Chaucer in the old forms has *not* become popular, in the true sense of the word; he is *not* "understanded of the vulgar." In this volume, therefore, the text of Chaucer has been presented in nineteenth-century garb. But there has been not the slightest attempt to "modernise" Chaucer, in the wider meaning of the phrase; to replace his words by words which he did not use; or, following the example of some operators, to translate him into English of the modern spirit as well as the modern forms. So far from that, in every case where the old spelling or form seemed essential to metre, to rhyme, or meaning, no change has been attempted. But, wherever its preservation was not essential, the spelling of the monkish transcribers—for the most ardent purist must now despair of getting at the spelling of Chaucer himself—has been discarded for that of the reader's own day. It is a poor compliment to the Father of English Poetry, to say that by such treatment the *bouquet* and individuality of his works must be lost. If his masterpiece is valuable for one thing more than any other, it is the vivid distinctness with which English men and women of the fourteenth century are there painted, for the study of all the centuries to follow. But we wantonly balk the artist's own purpose, and discredit his labour, when we keep before his picture the screen of dust and cobwebs which, for the English people in these days, the crude forms of the infant language have practically become. Shakespeare has not suffered by similar changes; Spenser has not suffered; it would be surprising if Chaucer should suffer, when the loss of popular comprehension and favour in his case are necessarily all the greater for his remoteness from our day. In a much smaller degree—since previous labours in the same direction had left far less to do—the same work has been performed for the spelling of Spenser; and the

whole endeavour in this department of the Editor's task has been, to present a text plain and easily intelligible to the modern reader, without rendering any injustice to the old poet. It would be presumptuous to believe that in every case both ends have been achieved together; but the *laudatores temporis acti*—the students who may differ most from the plan pursued in this volume—will best appreciate the difficulty of the enterprise, and most leniently regard any failure in the details of its accomplishment.

With all the works of Chaucer, outside *The Canterbury Tales*, it would have been absolutely impossible to deal within the scope of this volume. But nearly one hundred pages (200–292), have been devoted to his minor poems; and, by dint of careful selection and judicious abridgment—a connecting outline of the story in all such cases being given—the Editor ventures to hope that he has presented fair and acceptable specimens of Chaucer's workmanship in all styles. The preparation of this part of the volume has been a laborious task; no similar attempt on the same scale has been made; and, while here also the truth of the text in matters essential has been in nowise sacrificed to mere ease of perusal, the general reader will find opened up for him a new view of Chaucer and his works. Before a perusal of these hundred pages, will melt away for ever the lingering tradition or prejudice that Chaucer was only, or characteristically, a coarse buffoon, who pandered to a base and licentious appetite by painting and exaggerating the lowest vices of his time. In these selections—made without a thought of taking only what is to the poet's credit from a wide range of poems in which hardly a word is to his discredit—we behold Chaucer as he was; a courtier, a gallant, pure-hearted gentleman, a scholar, a philosopher, a poet of gay and vivid fancy, playing around themes of chivalric convention, of deep human interest, or broad-sighted satire. In *The Canterbury Tales*, we see, not Chaucer, but Chaucer's times and neighbours; the artist has lost himself in his work. To show him honestly and without disguise, as he lived his own life and sung his own songs at the brilliant Court of Edward III., is to do his memory a moral justice far more material than any literary wrong that can ever come out of spelling. As to the minor poems of Spenser, which follow *The Faerie Queen*, the choice has been governed by the desire to give at once the most interesting, and the most characteristic of the poet's several styles; and, save in the case of the Sonnets, the poems so selected are given entire.

It is manifest that the endeavours to adapt this volume for popular use, which have been already noticed, would imperfectly succeed without the aid of notes and glossary, to explain allusions that have become obsolete, or antiquated words which it was necessary to retain. An endeavour has been made to render each page self-explanatory, by placing on it all the glossarial and illustrative notes required for its elucidation, or—to avoid repetitions that would have occupied space—the references to the spot where information may be found. The great advantage of such a plan to the reader, is the measure of its difficulty for the editor. It permits much more flexibility in the choice of glossarial explanations or equivalents; it saves the distracting and time-consuming labour of reference to the end or the beginning of the book; but, at the

same time, it largely enhances the liabilities to error. The Editor is conscious that in the 12,000 or 13,000 notes, as well as in the innumerable minute points of spelling, accentuation, and rhythm, he must now and again be found tripping; he can only ask any reader who may detect all that he could himself point out as being amiss, to set off against inevitable mistakes and misjudgments, the conscientious labour bestowed on the book, and the broad consideration of its fitness for the object contemplated.

The Editor, working frequently under disadvantages, has incurred the sole responsibility for the issue of the undertaking. From books he has derived valuable help; as from Mr Cowden Clarke's revised modern text of *The Canterbury Tales*, published in Mr Nimmo's Library Edition of the English Poets; from Mr Wright's scholarly edition of the same work; from the indispensable Tyrwhitt; from Mr Bell's edition of Chaucer's Poems; from Professor Craik's "*Spenser and his Poetry*," published twenty-five years ago by Charles Knight; and from many others. In the abridgment of *The Faerie Queen*, the plan may at first sight seem to be modelled on the lines of Mr Craik's painstaking condensation; but the coincidences are either inevitable or involuntary. Many of the notes, especially of those explaining classical references and those attached to the minor poems of Chaucer, have been prepared specially for this edition. The Editor leaves his task with the hope that his attempt to remove artificial obstacles to the popularity of England's earliest great poets, will not altogether miscarry.

D. LAING PURVES.

LONDON, December 7, 1869.

THE CANTERBURY TALES;

AND OTHER POEMS

OF

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

LIFE OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

Nor in point of genius only, but even in point of time, Chaucer may claim the proud designation of "first" English poet. He wrote "The Court of Love" in 1346, and "The Romaunt of the Rose," if not also "Troilus and Cressida," probably within the next decade: the dates usually assigned to the poems of Laurence Minot extend from 1335 to 1355, while "The Vision of Piers Plowman" mentions events that occurred in 1360 and 1362—before which date Chaucer had certainly written "The Assembly of Fowls" and his "Dream." But, though they were his contemporaries, neither Minot nor Langland (if Langland was the author of the Vision) at all approached Chaucer in the finish, the force, or the universal interest of their works; and the poems of earlier writers, as Layamon and the author of the "Ormulum," are less English than Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Norman. Those poems reflected the perplexed struggle for supremacy between the two grand elements of our language, which marked the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; a struggle intimately associated with the political relations between the conquering Normans and the subjugated Anglo-Saxons. Chaucer found two branches of the language; that spoken by the people, Teutonic in its genius and its forms; that spoken by the learned and the noble, based on the French. Yet each branch had begun to borrow of the other—just as nobles and people had been taught to recognise that each needed the other in the wars and the social tasks of the time; and Chaucer, a scholar, a courtier, a man conversant with all orders of society, but accustomed to speak, think, and write in the words of the highest, by his comprehensive genius cast into the simmering mould a magical amalgamant which made the two half-hostile elements unite and interpenetrate each other. Before Chaucer wrote, there were two tongues in England, keeping alive the feuds and resentments of cruel centuries; when he laid down his pen, there was practically but one speech—there was, and ever since has been, but one people.

Geoffrey Chaucer, according to the most trustworthy traditions—for authentic testimonies on this subject are wanting—was born in 1328; and London is generally believed to have been his birth-place. It is true that Leland, the biographer of England's first great poet who lived nearest to his time, not merely speaks of Chaucer as having been born many years later than the date now assigned, but mentions Berkshire or Oxfordshire as the scene of his birth. So great uncertainty have some felt on the latter score, that elaborate parallels have been drawn between Chaucer, and Homer—for whose birth-place several cities contended, and whose descent was traced to the demigods. Leland may seem to have had fair opportunities of getting at the truth about Chaucer's birth—for Henry VIII. had commissioned him, at the suppression of the monasteries throughout England, to

search for records of public interest the archives of the religious houses. But it may be questioned whether he was likely to find many authentic particulars regarding the personal history of the poet in the quarters which he explored; and Leland's testimony seems to be set aside by Chaucer's own evidence as to his birth-place, and by the contemporary references which make him out an aged man for years preceding the accepted date of his death. In one of his prose works, "The Testament of Love," the poet speaks of himself in terms that strongly confirm the claim of London to the honour of giving him birth; for he there mentions "the city of London, that is to me so dear and sweet, in which I was forth grown; and more kindly love," says he, "have I to that place than to any other in earth; as every kindly creature hath full appetite to that *place of his kindly engendrure*, and to will rest and peace in that place to abide." This tolerably direct evidence is supported—so far as it can be at such an interval of time—by the learned Camden; in his *Annals of Queen Elizabeth*, he describes Spenser, who (see page 295) was certainly born in London, as being a fellow-citizen of Chaucer's—"Edmundus Spenserius, patriâ Londinensis, Musis adeo ardentibus natus, ut omnes Anglicos superioris ævi poetas, ne Chaucero quidem concive excepto, superaret." The records of the time notice more than one person of the name of Chaucer, who held honourable positions about the Court; and though we cannot distinctly trace the poet's relationship with any of these namesakes or antecessors, we find excellent ground for belief that his family or friends stood well at Court, in the ease with which Chaucer made his way there, and in his subsequent career.

Like his great successor, Spenser, it was the fortune of Chaucer to live under a splendid, chivalrous, and high-spirited reign. 1328 was the second year of Edward III.; and, what with Scotch wars, French expeditions, and the strenuous and costly struggle to hold England in a worthy place among the States of Europe, there was sufficient bustle, bold achievement, and high ambition in the period to inspire a poet who was prepared to catch the spirit of the day. It was an age of elaborate courtesy, of high-paced gallantry, of courageous venture, of noble disdain for mean tranquillity; and Chaucer, on the whole a man of peaceful avocations, was penetrated to the depth of his consciousness with the lofty and lovely civil side of that brilliant and restless military period. No record of his youthful years, however, remains to us; if we believe that at the age of eighteen he was a student of Cambridge, it is only on the strength of a reference in his "Court of Love" (page 206), where the narrator is made to say that his name is Philogenet, "of Cambridge clerk;" while he had (page 201) already told us that when he was stirred to seek the Court of Cupid he was "at eighteen year of age." According to Leland, however, he was educated at Oxford, proceeding thence to France and the Netherlands, to finish his studies; but there remains no certain evidence of his having belonged to either University. At the same time, it is not doubted that his family was of good condition; and, whether or not we accept the assertion that his father held the rank of knighthood—rejecting the hypotheses that make him a merchant, or a vintner "at the corner of Kirton Lane"—it is plain, from Chaucer's whole career, that he had introductions to public life, and recommendations to courtly favour, wholly independent of his genius. We have the clearest testimony that his mental training was of wide range and thorough excellence, altogether rare for a mere courtier in those days: his poems attest his intimate acquaintance with the divinity, the philosophy, and the scholarship of his time, and show him to have had the sciences, as then developed and taught, "at his fingers' ends." Another proof of Chaucer's good birth and fortune would be found in the statement that, after his University career was completed, he entered the Inner Temple—the expenses of which could be borne only by men of noble and opulent families; but although

there is a story that he was once fined two shillings for thrashing a Franciscan friar in Fleet Street, we have no direct authority for believing that the poet devoted himself to the uncongenial study of the law. No special display of knowledge on that subject appears in his works; yet in the sketch of the Manciple, in the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* (page 23), may be found indications of his familiarity with the internal economy of the Inns of Court; while numerous legal phrases and references hint that his comprehensive information was not at fault on legal matters. Leland says that he quitted the University "a ready logician, a smooth rhetorician, a pleasant poet, a grave philosopher, an ingenious mathematician, and a holy divine;" and by all accounts, when Geoffrey Chaucer comes before us authentically for the first time, at the age of thirty-one, he was possessed of knowledge and accomplishments far beyond the common standard of his day.

Chaucer at this period possessed also other qualities fitted to recommend him to favour in a Court like that of Edward III. Urry describes him, on the authority of a portrait, as being then "of a fair beautiful complexion, his lips red and full, his size of a just medium, and his port and air graceful and majestic. So," continues the ardent biographer,—“so that every ornament that could claim the approbation of the great and fair, his abilities to record the valour of the one, and celebrate the beauty of the other, and his wit and gentle behaviour to converse with both, conspired to make him a complete courtier.” If we believe that his “*Court of Love*” had received such publicity as the literary media of the time allowed in the somewhat narrow and select literary world—not to speak of “*Troilus and Cressida*,” which, as Lydgate mentions it first among Chaucer’s works, some have supposed to be a youthful production—we find a third and not less powerful recommendation to the favour of the great co-operating with his learning and his gallant bearing. Elsewhere (page 281) reasons have been shown for doubt whether “*Troilus and Cressida*” should not be assigned to a later period of Chaucer’s life; but very little is positively known about the dates and sequence of his various works. In the year 1386, being called as witness with regard to a contest on a point of heraldry between Lord Scrope and Sir Robert Grosvenor, Chaucer deposed that he entered on his military career in 1359. In that year Edward III. invaded France, for the third time, in pursuit of his claim to the French crown; and we may fancy that, in describing the embarkation of the knights in “*Chaucer’s Dream*” (pages 277–278), the poet gained some of the vividness and stir of his picture from his recollections of the embarkation of the splendid and well-appointed royal host at Sandwich, on board the eleven hundred transports provided for the enterprise. In this expedition the laurels of Poitiers were flung on the ground; after vainly attempting Rheims and Paris, Edward was constrained, by cruel weather and lack of provisions, to retreat toward his ships; the fury of the elements made the retreat more disastrous than an overthrow in pitched battle; horses and men perished by thousands, or fell into the hands of the pursuing French. Chaucer, who had been made prisoner at the siege of Retters, was among the captives in the possession of France when the treaty of Bretigny—the “great peace”—was concluded, in May, 1360. Returning to England, as we may suppose, at the peace, the poet, ere long, fell into another and a pleasanter captivity; for his marriage is generally believed to have taken place shortly after his release from foreign durance. He had already gained the personal friendship and favour of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, the King’s son; the Duke, while Earl of Richmond, had courted, and won to wife after a certain delay, Blanche, daughter and co-heiress of Henry Duke of Lancaster; and Chaucer is by some believed to have written “*The Assembly of Fowls*” to celebrate the wooing, as he wrote “*Chaucer’s Dream*” to celebrate the wedding, of his patron. The marriage took place in 1359, the year of Chaucer’s expedition to

France; and as, in "The Assembly of Fowls," the formel or female eagle, who is supposed to represent the Lady Blanche, begs that her choice of a mate may be deferred for a year, 1358 and 1359 have been assigned as the respective dates of the two poems already mentioned. In the "Dream," Chaucer prominently introduces his own lady-love, to whom, after the happy union of his patron with the Lady Blanche, he is wedded amid great rejoicing; and various expressions in the same poem show that not only was the poet high in favour with the illustrious pair, but that his future wife had also peculiar claims on their regard. She was the younger daughter of Sir Payne Roet, a native of Hainault, who had, like many of his countrymen, been attracted to England by the example and patronage of Queen Philippa. The favourite attendant on the Lady Blanche was her elder sister Katherine: subsequently married to Sir Hugh Swynford, a gentleman of Lincolnshire; and destined, after the death of Blanche, to be in succession governess of her children, mistress of John of Gaunt, and lawfully-wedded Duchess of Lancaster. It is quite sufficient proof that Chaucer's position at Court was of no mean consequence, to find that his wife, the sister of the future Duchess of Lancaster, was one of the royal maids of honour, and even, as Sir Harris Nicolas conjectures, a god-daughter of the Queen—for her name also was Philippa.

Between 1359, when the poet himself testifies that he was made prisoner while bearing arms in France, and September 1366, when Queen Philippa granted to her former maid of honour, by the name of Philippa Chaucer, a yearly pension of ten marks, or £6, 13s. 4d., we have no authentic mention of Chaucer, express or indirect. It is plain from this grant that the poet's marriage with Sir Payne Roet's daughter was not celebrated later than 1366; the probability is, that it closely followed his return from the wars. In 1367, Edward III. settled upon Chaucer a life-pension of twenty marks, "for the good service which our beloved Valet—*dilectus Valettus noster*—Geoffrey Chaucer has rendered, and will render in time to come." Camden explains *Valettus hospitii* to signify a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber; Selden says that the designation was bestowed "upon young heirs designed to be knighted, or young gentlemen of great descent and quality." Whatever the strict meaning of the word, it is plain that the poet's position was honourable and near to the King's person, and also that his worldly circumstances were easy, if not affluent—for it need not be said that twenty marks in those days represented twelve or twenty times the sum in these. It is believed that he found powerful patronage, not merely from the Duke of Lancaster and his wife, but from Margaret Countess of Pembroke, the King's daughter. To her Chaucer is supposed to have addressed the "Goodly Ballad" (page 289), in which the lady is celebrated under the image of the daisy; her he is by some understood to have represented under the title of Queen Alcestis, in the "Court of Love" and the Prologue to "The Legend of Good Women;" and in her praise we may read his charming descriptions and eulogies of the daisy—French, "*Marguerite*," the name of his Royal patroness. To this period of Chaucer's career we may probably attribute the elegant and courtly, if somewhat conventional, poems of "The Flower and the Leaf," "The Cuckoo and the Nightingale," &c. "The Lady Margaret," says Urry, ". . . would frequently compliment him upon his poems. But this is not to be meant of his Canterbury Tales, they being written in the latter part of his life, when the courtier and the fine gentleman gave way to solid sense and plain descriptions. In his love-pieces he was obliged to have the strictest regard to modesty and decency; the ladies at that time insisting so much upon the nicest punctilios of honour, that it was highly criminal to depreciate their sex, or do anything that might offend virtue." Chaucer, in their estimation, had sinned against the dignity and honour of womankind by his translation of the French "*Roman de la Rose*," and by his

"Troilus and Cressida"—assuming it to have been among his less mature works ; and to atone for those offences the Lady Margaret (though other and older accounts say that it was the first Queen of Richard II., Anne of Bohemia), prescribed to him the task of writing "The Legend of Good Women" (see introductory note, page 281). About this period, too, we may place the composition of Chaucer's A.B.C., or The Prayer of Our Lady (page 287), made at the request of the Duchess Blanche, a lady of great devoutness in her private life. She died in 1369 ; and Chaucer, as he had allegorised her wooing, celebrated her marriage, and aided her devotions, now lamented her death, in a poem entitled "The Book of the Duchess ; or, the Death of Blanche."¹

In 1370, Chaucer was employed on the King's service abroad ; and in November 1372, by the title of "*Soutifer noster*"—our Esquire or Shield-bearer—he was associated with "Jacobus Pronan," and "Johannes de Mari civis Januensis," in a royal commission, bestowing full powers to treat with the Duke of Genoa, his Council, and State. The object of the embassy was to negotiate upon the choice of an English port at which the Genoese might form a commercial establishment ; and Chaucer, having quitted England in December, visited Genoa and Florence, and returned to England before the 22d of November 1373—for on that day he drew his pension from the Exchequer in person. The most interesting point connected with this Italian mission is the question, whether Chaucer visited Petrarch at Padua. That he did, is unhesitatingly affirmed by the old biographers ; but the authentic notices of Chaucer during the years 1372-1373, as shown by the researches of Sir Harris Nicolas, are confined to the facts already stated ; and we are left to answer the question by the probabilities of the case, and by the aid of what faint light the poet himself affords. We can scarcely fancy that Chaucer, visiting Italy for the first time, in a capacity which opened for him easy access to the great and the famous, did not embrace the chance of meeting a poet whose works he evidently knew in their native tongue, and highly esteemed. With Mr Wright, we are strongly disinclined to believe "that Chaucer did not profit by the opportunity . . . of improving his acquaintance with the poetry, if not the poets, of the country he thus visited, whose influence was now being felt on the literature of most countries of Western Europe." That Chaucer was familiar with the Italian language appears not merely from his repeated selection as Envoy to Italian States, but by many passages in his poetry, from "The Assembly of Fowls" to "The Canterbury Tales." In the opening of the first poem (as pointed out in note 37, page 217) there is a striking parallel to Dante's inscription on the gate of Hell. The first Song of Troilus, in "Troilus and Cressida" (page 250), is a nearly literal translation of Petrarch's 88th Sonnet. In the Prologue to "The Legend of Good Women" (see note 10, page 285), there is a reference to Dante which can hardly have reached the poet at second-hand. And in Chaucer's great work—as in The Wife of Bath's Tale (see note 22, page 81), and The Monk's Tale (see note 13, page 164)—direct reference by name is made to Dante, "the wise poet of Florence," "the great poet of Italy," as the source whence the author has quoted. When we consider the poet's high place in literature and at Court, which could not fail to make him free of the hospitalities of the brilliant little Lombard States ; his familiarity with the tongue and the works

¹ Called in the editions before 1597 "The Dream of Chaucer"—and inadvertently mentioned under that name in note 31, page 60. The poem, which is not included in the present edition, does indeed, like many of Chaucer's smaller works, tell the story of a dream, in which a knight, representing John of Gaunt, is found by the poet mourning the loss of his lady ; but the true "Dream of Chaucer," in which he celebrates the marriage of his patron, was published for the first time by Speght in 1597. John of Gaunt, in the end of 1371, married his second wife, Constance, daughter to Pedro the Cruel of Spain ; so that "The Book of the Duchess" must have been written between 1369 and 1371.

of Italy's greatest bards, dead and living; the reverential regard which he paid to the memory of great poets, of which we have examples in "The House of Fame," and at the close of "Troilus and Cressida";¹ along with his own testimony in the Prologue to The Clerk's Tale, we cannot fail to construe that testimony as a declaration that the Tale was actually told to Chaucer by the lips of Petrarch, in 1373, the very year in which Petrarch translated it into Latin, from Boccaccio's "Decameron."² Mr Ball notes the objection to this interpretation, that the words are put into the mouth, not of the poet, but of the Clerk; and meets it by the counter-objection, that the Clerk, being a purely imaginary personage, could not have learned the story at Padua from Petrarch—and therefore that Chaucer must have departed from the dramatic assumption maintained in the rest of the dialogue. Instances could be adduced from Chaucer's writings to show that such a sudden "departure from the dramatic assumption" would not be unexampled: witness the "aside" in The Wife of Bath's Prologue, where, after the jolly Dame has asserted that "half so boldly there can no man swear and lie as a woman can" (page 73), the poet hastens to interpose, in his own person, these two lines:

"I say not this by wives that be wise,
But if it be when they them misadvise."

And again, in the Prologue to the "Legend of Good Women," from a description of the daisy—

"She is the cleanness and the very light,
That in this dark world me guides and leads,"

the poet, in the very next lines, slides into an address to his lady:

"The heart within my sorrowful heart you dreads
And loves so sore, that ye be, verily,
The mistress of my wit, and nothing I," &c.³

When, therefore, the Clerk of Oxford is made to say that he will tell a tale—

"The which that I
Learn'd at Padova of a worthy clerk,
As proved by his wordes and his werk.
He is now dead, and nailed in his chest,
I pray to God to give his soul good rest.
Francis Petrarch, the laureate poete,
Highte this clerk, whose rhetoric so sweet
Illumin'd all Itails of poetry. . . .
But forth to tellen of this worthy man,
That taughte me this tale, as I began." . . .

we may without violent effort believe that Chaucer speaks in his own person, though dramatically the words are on the Clerk's lips. And the belief is not impaired by the sorrowful way in which the Clerk lingers on Petrarch's death—which would be less intelligible if the fictitious narrator had only read the story in the Latin translation, than if we suppose the news of Petrarch's death at Arquà in July 1374 to have closely followed Chaucer to England, and to have cruelly and irresistibly mingled itself with our poet's personal recollections of his great Italian contemporary. Nor must we regard as without significance the manner in which the Clerk is made to distinguish between the "body" of Petrarch's tale, and the fashion in which it was set forth in writing, with a proem that seemed "a thing impertinent," save

¹ Where (page 273) he bids his "little book"

"Subject be unto all poesy,
And kiss the steps, where as thou seest space,
Of Virgil, Ovid, Homer, Lucan, Stace."

² See note 13, page 93.

³ See note 16, page 282.

that the poet had chosen in that way to "convey his matter"—told, or "taught," so much more directly and simply by word of mouth. It is impossible to pronounce positively on the subject; the question whether Chaucer saw Petrarch in 1373 must remain a moot-point, so long as we have only our present information; but fancy loves to dwell on the thought of the two poets conversing under the vines at Arquà; and we find in the history and the writings of Chaucer nothing to contradict, a good deal to countenance, the belief that such a meeting occurred.

Though we have no express record, we have indirect testimony, that Chaucer's Genoese mission was discharged satisfactorily; for on the 23d of April 1374, Edward III. grants at Windsor to the poet, by the title of "our beloved squire"—*dilecto Armigero nostro—unum pycher. vini*, "one pitcher of wine" daily, to be "perceived" in the port of London; a grant which, on the analogy of more modern usage, might be held equivalent to Chaucer's appointment as Poet Laureate. When we find that soon afterwards the grant was commuted for a money payment of twenty marks per annum, we need not conclude that Chaucer's circumstances were poor; for it may be easily supposed that the daily "perception" of such an article of income was attended with considerable prosaic inconvenience. A permanent provision for Chaucer was made on the 8th of June 1374, when he was appointed Controller of the Customs in the Port of London, for the lucrative imports of wools, skins or "wool-fells," and tanned hides—on condition that he should fulfil the duties of that office in person and not by deputy, and should write out the accounts with his own hand. We have what seems evidence of Chaucer's compliance with these terms in "The House of Fame" (page 235), where, by the mouth of the eagle, the poet describes himself, when he has finished his labour and made his reckonings, as not seeking rest and news in social intercourse, but going home to his own house, and there, "all so dumb as any stone," sitting "at another book," until his look is dazed; and again, in the record that in 1376 he received a grant of £71, 4s. 6d., the amount of a fine levied on one John Kent, whom Chaucer's vigilance had frustrated in the attempt to ship a quantity of wool for Dordrecht without paying the duty. The seemingly derogatory condition, that the Controller should write out the accounts or rolls ("*rotulos*") of his office with his own hand, appears to have been designed, or treated, as merely formal; no records in Chaucer's handwriting are known to exist—which could hardly be the case if, for the twelve years of his Controllership (1374–1386), he had duly complied with the condition; and during that period he was more than once employed abroad, so that the condition was evidently regarded as a formality even by those who had imposed it. Also in 1374, the Duke of Lancaster, whose ambitious views may well have made him anxious to retain the adhesion of a man so capable and accomplished as Chaucer, changed into a joint life-annuity remaining to the survivor, and charged on the revenues of the Savoy, a pension of £10 which two years before he settled on the poet's wife—whose sister was then the governess of the Duke's two daughters, Philippa and Elizabeth, and the Duke's own mistress. Another proof of Chaucer's personal reputation and high Court favour at this time, is his selection (1375) as ward to the son of Sir Edmond Staplegate of Bilynton, in Kent; a charge on the surrender of which the guardian received no less a sum than £104.

We find Chaucer in 1376 again employed on a foreign mission. In 1377, the last year of Edward III., he was sent to Flanders with Sir Thomas Percy, afterwards Earl of Worcester, for the purpose of obtaining a prolongation of the truce; and in January 1378, he was associated with Sir Guichard d'Angle and other Commissioners, to pursue certain negotiations for a marriage between Princess Mary of France and the young King Richard II., which had been set on foot before the death of Edward III. The negotiation, however, proved fruitless; and in May 1378,

Chaucer was selected to accompany Sir John Berkeley on a mission to the Court of Bernardo Visconti, Duke of Milan, with the view, it is supposed, of concerting military plans against the outbreak of war with France. The new King, meantime, had shown that he was not insensible to Chaucer's merit—or to the influence of his tutor and the poet's patron, the Duke of Lancaster; for Richard II. confirmed to Chaucer his pension of twenty marks, along with an equal annual sum, for which the daily pitcher of wine granted in 1374 had been commuted. Before his departure for Lombardy, Chaucer—still holding his post in the Customs—selected two representatives or trustees, to protect his estate against legal proceedings in his absence, or to sue in his name defaulters and offenders against the imposts which he was charged to enforce. One of these trustees was called Richard Forrester; the other was John Gower, the poet, the most famous English contemporary of Chaucer, with whom he had for many years been on terms of admiring friendship—although, from the strictures passed on certain productions of Gower's in the Prologue to *The Man of Law's Tale*,¹ it has been supposed that in the later years of Chaucer's life the friendship suffered some diminution. To the "moral Gower" and "the philosophical Strode," Chaucer "directed" or dedicated his "*Troilus and Cressida*;"² while, in the "*Confessio Amantis*," Gower introduces a handsome compliment to his greater contemporary, as the "disciple and the poet" of Venus, with whose glad songs and ditties, made in her praise during the flowers of his youth, the land was filled everywhere. Gower, however—a monk and a Conservative—held to the party of the Duke of Gloucester, the rival of the Wycliffite and innovating Duke of Lancaster, who was Chaucer's patron, and whose cause was not a little aided by Chaucer's strictures on the clergy; and thus it is not impossible that political differences may have weakened the old bonds of personal friendship and poetic esteem. Returning from Lombardy early in 1379, Chaucer seems to have been again sent abroad; for the records exhibit no trace of him between May and December of that year. Whether by proxy or in person, however, he received his pensions regularly until 1382, when his income was increased by his appointment to the post of Controller of Petty Customs in the port of London. In November 1384, he obtained a month's leave of absence on account of his private affairs, and a deputy was appointed to fill his place; and in February of the next year he was permitted to appoint a permanent deputy—thus at length gaining relief from that close attention to business which probably curtailed the poetic fruits of the poet's most powerful years.³

¹ See page 61, and note 9.

² "Written," says Mr Wright, "in the sixteenth year of the reign of Richard II. (1392-1393);" a powerful confirmation of the opinion that this poem was really produced in Chaucer's mature age. See the introductory notes to it (page 248) and to the *Legend of Good Women* (page 281).

³ The old biographers of Chaucer, founding on what they took to be autobiographic allusions in "*The Testament of Love*," assign to him between 1384 and 1389 a very different history from that here given on the strength of authentic records explored and quoted by Sir H. Nicolas. Chaucer is made to espouse the cause of John of Northampton, the Wycliffite Lord Mayor of London, whose re-election in 1384 was so vehemently opposed by the clergy, and who was imprisoned in the sequel of the grave disorders that arose. The poet, it is said, fled to the Continent, taking with him a large sum of money, which he spent in supporting companions in exile; then, returning by stealth to England in quest of funds, he was detected and sent to the Tower, where he languished for three years, being released only on the humiliating condition of informing against his associates in the plot. The public records show, however, that, all the time of his alleged exile and captivity, he was quietly living in London, regularly drawing his pensions in person, sitting in Parliament, and discharging his duties in the Customs until his dismissal in 1386. It need not be said, further, that although Chaucer freely handled the errors, the ignorance, and vices of the clergy, he did so rather as a man of sense and of conscience, than as a Wycliffite—and there is no evidence that he espoused the opinions

Chaucer is next found occupying a post which has not often been held by men gifted with his peculiar genius—that of a county member. The contest between the Dukes of Gloucester and Lancaster, and their adherents, for the control of the Government, was coming to a crisis; and when the recluse and studious Chaucer was induced to offer himself to the electors of Kent as one of the knights of their shire—where presumably he held property—we may suppose that it was with the view of supporting his patron's cause in the impending conflict. The Parliament in which the poet sat assembled at Westminster on the 1st of October, and was dissolved on the 1st of November, 1386. Lancaster was fighting and intriguing abroad, absorbed in the affairs of his Castilian succession; Gloucester and his friends at home had everything their own way; the Earl of Suffolk was dismissed from the woolstack, and impeached by the Commons; and although Richard at first stood out courageously for the friends of his uncle Lancaster, he was constrained, by the refusal of supplies, to consent to the proceedings of Gloucester. A commission was wrung from him, under protest, appointing Gloucester, Arundel, and twelve other Peers and prelates, a permanent council to inquire into the condition of all the public departments, the courts of law, and the royal household, with absolute powers of redress and dismissal. We need not ascribe to Chaucer's Parliamentary exertions in his patron's behalf, nor to any malpractices in his official conduct, the fact that he was among the earliest victims of the commission.¹ In December 1386, he was dismissed from both his offices in the port of London; but he retained his pensions, and drew them regularly twice a year at the Exchequer until 1388. In 1387, Chaucer's political reverses were aggravated by a severe domestic calamity: his wife died, and with her died the pension which had been settled on her by Queen Philippa in 1366, and confirmed to her at Richard's accession in 1377. The change made in Chaucer's pecuniary position, by the loss of his offices and his wife's pension, must have been very great. It would appear that during his prosperous times he had lived in a style quite equal to his income, and had no ample resources against a season of reverse; for, on the 1st of May 1388, less than a year and a half after being dismissed from the Customs, he was constrained to assign his pensions, by surrender in Chancery, to one John Scalby.

In May 1389, Richard II., now of age, abruptly resumed the reins of government, which, for more than two years, had been ably but cruelly managed by Gloucester. The friends of Lancaster were once more supreme in the royal councils, and Chaucer speedily profited by the change. On the 12th of July he was appointed Clerk of the King's Works at the Palace of Westminster, the Tower, the royal manors of Kennington, Eltham, Clarendon, Sheen, Byfleet, Childern Langley, and Feckenham, the castle of Berkhamstead, the royal lodge of Hatherburgh in the New Forest, the lodges in the parks of Clarendon, Childern Langley, and Feckenham, and the mews for the King's falcons at Charing Cross; he received a salary of two shillings per day, and was allowed to perform the duties by deputy. For

of the zealous Reformer, far less played the part of an extreme and self-regardless partisan of his old friend and college-companion.

¹ "The Commissioners appear to have commenced their labours with examining the accounts of the officers employed in the collection of the revenue; and the sequel affords a strong presumption that the royal administration [under Lancaster and his friends] had been foully calumniated. We hear not of any frauds discovered, or of defaulters punished, or of grievances redressed." Such is the testimony of Lingard (chap. iv., 1386), all the more valuable for his aversion from the Wylliffe leanings of John of Gaunt. Chaucer's department in the London Customs was in those days one of the most important and lucrative in the kingdom; and if mercenary abuse of his post could have been proved, we may be sure that his and his patron's enemies would not have been content with simple dismissal, but would have heavily amerced or imprisoned him.

some reason unknown, Chaucer held this lucrative office¹ little more than two years, quitting it before the 16th of September 1391, at which date it had passed into the hands of one John Gedney. The next two years and a half are a blank, so far as authentic records are concerned; Chaucer is supposed to have passed them in retirement, probably devoting them principally to the composition of *The Canterbury Tales*. In February 1394, the King conferred upon him a grant of £20 a year for life; but he seems to have had no other source of income, and to have become embarrassed by debt, for frequent memoranda of small advances on his pension show that his circumstances were, in comparison, greatly reduced. Things appear to have grown worse and worse with the poet; for in May 1398 he was compelled to obtain from the King letters of protection against arrest, extending over a term of two years. Not for the first time, it is true—for similar documents had been issued at the beginning of Richard's reign; but at that time Chaucer's missions abroad, and his responsible duties in the port of London, may have furnished reasons for securing him against annoyance or frivolous prosecution, which were wholly wanting at the later date. In 1398, fortune began again to smile upon him; he received a royal grant of a tun of wine annually, the value being about £4. Next year, Richard II. having been deposed by the son of John of Gaunt²—Henry of Bolingbroke, Duke of Lancaster—the new King, four days after his accession, bestowed on Chaucer a grant of forty marks (£26, 13s. 4d.) per annum, in addition to the pension of £20 conferred by Richard II. in 1394. But the poet, now seventy-one years of age, and probably broken down by the reverses of the past few years, was not destined long to enjoy his renewed prosperity. On Christmas Eve of 1399, he entered on the possession of a house in the garden of the Chapel of the Blessed Mary of Westminster—near to the present site of Henry VII.'s Chapel—having obtained a lease from Robert Hermodsworth, a monk of the adjacent convent, for fifty-three years, at the annual rent of four marks (£2, 13s. 4d.) Until the 1st of March 1400, Chaucer drew his pensions in person; then they were received for him by another hand; and on the 25th of October, in the same year, he died, at the age of seventy-two. The only lights thrown by his poems on his closing days are furnished in the little ballad called "*Good Counsel of Chaucer*,"³—which, though said to have been written when "upon his death-bed lying in his great anguish," breathes the very spirit of courage, resignation, and philosophic calm; and by the "*Retractation*" at the end of *The Canterbury Tales*,⁴ which, if it was not foisted in by monkish transcribers, may be supposed the effect of Chaucer's regrets and self-reproaches on that solemn review of his life-work which the close approach of death compelled. The poet was buried in Westminster Abbey;⁵ and not many years after his death a slab was

¹ The salary was £36, 10s. per annum; the salary of the Chief Judges was £40, of the Puisne Judges about £27. Probably the Judges—certainly the Clerk of the Works—had fees or perquisites besides the stated payment.

² Chaucer's patron had died earlier in 1399, during the exile of his son (then Duke of Hereford) in France. The Duchess Constance had died in 1394; and the Duke had made reparation to Katherine Swynford—who had already borne him four children—by marrying her in 1396, with the approval of Richard II., who legitimated the children, and made the eldest son of the poet's sister-in-law Earl of Somerset. From this long-illicit union sprang the house of Beaufort—that being the surname of the Duke's children by Katherine, after the name of the castle in Anjou (Belfort, or Beaufort) where they were born.

³ Page 291.

⁴ Page 199, and note 4.

⁵ Of Chaucer's two sons by Philippa Roet, his only wife, the younger, Lewis, for whom he wrote the *Treatise on the Astrolabe*, died young. The elder, Thomas, married Maud, the second daughter and co-heiress of Sir John Burgherh, brother of the Bishop of Lincoln, the Chancellor and Treasurer of England. By this marriage Thomas Chaucer acquired great estates in Oxfordshire and elsewhere; and he figured prominently in the second rank of courtiers for many years. He was Chief Butler to Richard II.; under Henry IV. he was Constable of Wallingford Castle, Steward of the Honours of Wallingford and St Valery, and of the

placed on a pillar near his grave, bearing the lines, taken from an epitaph or eulogy made by Stephanus Surigonus of Milan, at the request of Caxton :

*" Galfridus Chaucer, vates, et fama poësis
Materna, hæc sacra sum tumulatus humo."*

About 1555, Mr Nicholas Brigham, a gentleman of Oxford who greatly admired the genius of Chaucer, erected the present tomb, as near to the spot where the poet lay, "before the chapel of St Benet," as was then possible by reason of the "cancelli," which the Duke of Buckingham subsequently obtained leave to remove, that room might be made for the tomb of Dryden. On the structure of Mr Brigham, besides a full-length representation of Chaucer, taken from a portrait drawn by his "scholar" Thomas Occleve, was—or is, though now almost illegible—the following inscription :—

M. R.
QUI FUIT ANGLORUM VATES TER MAXIMUS OLIM,
GALFRIDUS CHAUCER CONDITUR HOC TUMULO;
ANNUM SI QUÆRAS DOMINI, SI TEMPORA VITÆ,
ECCE NOTÆ SUBSUNT, QUÆ TIBI CUNCTA NOTANT.
25 OCTOBRE 1400.

ÆRUMNARUM REQUIES MORB.
N. BRIGHAM HOS FECIT MUSEARUM NOMINE SUMPTUS
1556.

Concerning his personal appearance and habits, Chaucer has not been reticent in his poetry. Urry sums up the traits of his aspect and character fairly thus : "He was of a middle stature, the latter part of his life inclinable to be fat and corpulent, as appears by the Host's bantering him in the journey to Canterbury, and comparing shapes with him.¹ His face was fleshy, his features just and regular, his complexion fair, and somewhat pale, his hair of a dusky yellow, short and thin; the hair of his beard in two forked tufts, of a wheat colour; his forehead broad and smooth; his eyes inclining usually to the ground, which is intimated by the Host's words; his whole face full of liveliness, a calm, easy sweetness, and a studious venerable aspect. . . . As to his temper, he had a mixture of the gay, the modest, and the grave. The sprightliness of his humour was more distinguished by his writings than by his appearance; which gave occasion to Margaret Countess of Pembroke often to rally him upon his silent modesty in company, telling him, that his absence was more agreeable to her than his conversation, since the first was productive of agreeable pieces of wit in his writings,² but the latter was filled with a modest deference, and a too distant respect. We see nothing merry or jocose in his behaviour with his pilgrims, but a silent attention to their mirth, rather than any mixture of his own. . . . When disengaged from public affairs, his time was entirely spent in study and reading; so agreeable to him was this exercise, that he

Chiltern Hundreds; and the queen of Henry IV. granted him the farm of several of her manors, a grant subsequently confirmed to him for life by the King, after the Queen's death. He sat in Parliament repeatedly for Oxfordshire, was Speaker in 1414, and in the same year went to France as commissioner to negotiate the marriage of Henry V. with the Princess Katherine. He held, before he died in 1434, various other posts of trust and distinction; but he left no heirs-male. His only child, Alice Chaucer, married twice; first Sir John Philip; and afterwards the Duke of Suffolk—attainted and beheaded in 1450. She had three children by the Duke; and her eldest son married the Princess Elizabeth, sister of Edward IV. The eldest son of this marriage, created Earl of Lincoln, was declared by Richard III. heir-apparent to the throne, in case the Prince of Wales should die without issue; but the death of Lincoln himself, at the battle of Stoke in 1487, destroyed all prospect that the poet's descendants might succeed to the crown of England; and his family is now believed to be extinct.

¹ See the Prologue to Chaucer's Tale of Sir Thopas, page 146.

² See the "Goodly Ballad of Chaucer," seventh stanza, page 290.

says he preferred it to all other sports and diversions.¹ He lived within himself, neither desirous to hear nor busy to concern himself with the affairs of his neighbours. His course of living was temperate and regular; he went to rest with the sun, and rose before it; and by that means enjoyed the pleasures of the better part of the day, his morning walk and fresh contemplations. This gave him the advantage of describing the morning in so lively a manner as he does everywhere in his works. The springing sun glows warm in his lines, and the fragrant air blows cool in his descriptions; we smell the sweets of the bloomy haws, and hear the music of the feathered choir, whenever we take a forest walk with him. The hour of the day is not easier to be discovered from the reflection of the sun in Titian's paintings, than in Chaucer's morning landscapes. . . . His reading was deep and extensive, his judgment sound and discerning. . . . In one word, he was a great scholar, a pleasant wit, a candid critic, a sociable companion, a steadfast friend, a grave philosopher, a temperate economist, and a pious Christian."

Chaucer's most important poems are "*Troilus and Cressida*," "*The Romaunt of the Rose*," and "*The Canterbury Tales*." Of the first, containing 8246 lines, an abridgment, with a prose connecting outline of the story, is given in this volume—pages 247–274. With the second, consisting of 7699 octosyllabic verses, like those in which "*The House of Fame*" is written, it was found impossible to deal in the present edition. The poem is a curtailed translation from the French "*Roman de la Rose*"—commenced by Guillaume de Lorris, who died in 1260, after contributing 4070 verses, and completed, in the last quarter of the thirteenth century, by Jean de Meun, who added some 18,000 verses. It is a satirical allegory, in which the vices of courts, the corruptions of the clergy, the disorders and inequalities of society in general, are unsparingly attacked, and the most revolutionary doctrines are advanced; and though, in making his translation, Chaucer softened or eliminated much of the satire of the poem, still it remained, in his verse, a caustic exposure of the abuses of the time, especially those which discredited the Church.

The *Canterbury Tales* are presented in this edition with as near an approach to completeness as regard for the popular character of the volume permitted. The 17,385 verses, of which the poetical *Tales* consist, have been given without abridgment or purgation—save in a single couplet; but, the main purpose of the volume being to make the general reader acquainted with the "poems" of Chaucer and Spenser, the Editor has ventured to contract the two prose *Tales*—Chaucer's *Tale of Melibæus*, and the *Parson's Sermon* or *Treatise on Penitence*—so as to save about thirty pages for the introduction of Chaucer's minor pieces. At the same time, by giving prose outlines of the omitted parts, it has been sought to guard the reader against the fear that he was losing anything essential, or even valuable. It is almost needless to describe the plot, or point out the literary place, of the *Canterbury Tales*. Perhaps in the entire range of ancient and modern literature there is no work that so clearly and freshly paints for future times the picture of the past; certainly no Englishman has ever approached Chaucer in the power of fixing for ever the fleeting traits of his own time. The plan of the poem had been adopted before Chaucer chose it; notably in the "*Decameron*" of Boccaccio—although, there, the circumstances under which the tales were told, with the terror of the plague hanging over the merry company, lend a grim grotesqueness to the narrative, unless we can look at it abstracted from its setting. Chaucer, on the other hand, strikes a perpetual key-note of gaiety whenever he mentions the word "pilgrimage;" and at

¹ See the opening of the Prologue to "*The Legend of Good Women*," page 282; and the poet's account of his habits in "*The House of Fame*," page 235.

every stage of the connecting story we bless the happy thought which gives us incessant incident, movement, variety, and unclouded but never monotonous joyousness. The poet, the evening before he starts on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St Thomas at Canterbury, lies at the Tabard Inn, in Southwark, curious to know in what companionship he is destined to fare forward on the morrow. Chance sends him "nine and twenty in a company," representing all orders of English society, lay and clerical, from the Knight and the Abbot down to the Ploughman and the Sompnour. The jolly Host of the Tabard, after supper, when tongues are loosened and hearts are opened, declares that "not this year" has he seen such a company at once under his roof-tree, and proposes that, when they set out next morning, he should ride with them and make them sport. All agree, and Harry Bailly unfolds his scheme: each pilgrim, including the poet, shall tell two tales on the road to Canterbury, and two on the way back to London; and he whom the general voice pronounces to have told the best tale, shall be treated to a supper at the common cost—and, of course, to mine Host's profit—when the cavalcade returns from the saint's shrine to the Southwark hostelry. All joyously assent; and early on the morrow, in the gay spring sunshine, they ride forth, listening to the heroic tale of the brave and gentle Knight, who has been gracefully chosen by the Host to lead the spirited competition of story-telling.

To describe thus the nature of the plan, and to say that when Chaucer conceived, or at least began to execute it, he was between sixty and seventy years of age, is to proclaim that *The Canterbury Tales* could never be more than a fragment. Thirty pilgrims, each telling two tales on the way out, and two more on the way back—that makes 120 tales; to say nothing of the prologue, the description of the journey, the occurrences at Canterbury, "and all the remnant of their pilgrimage," which Chaucer also undertook. No more than twenty-three of the 120 stories are told in the work as it comes down to us; that is, only twenty-three of the thirty pilgrims tell the first of the two stories on the road to Canterbury; while of the stories on the return journey we have not one, and nothing is said about the doings of the pilgrims at Canterbury—which would, if treated like the scene at the Tabard, have given us a still livelier "picture of the period." But the plan was too large; and although the poet had some reserves, in stories which he had already composed in an independent form, death cut short his labour ere he could even complete the arrangement and connection of more than a very few of the Tales. Incomplete as it is, however, the *magnum opus* of Chaucer was in his own time received with immense favour; manuscript copies are numerous even now—no slight proof of its popularity; and when the invention of printing was introduced into England by William Caxton, *The Canterbury Tales* issued from his press in the year after the first English-printed book, "The Game of the Chesse," had been struck off. Innumerable editions have since been published; and it may fairly be affirmed, that few books have been so much in favour with the reading public of every generation as this book, which the lapse of every generation has been rendering more unreadable.

Apart from "The Romaunt of the Rose," no really important poetical work of Chaucer's is omitted from or unrepresented in the present edition. Of "The Legend of Good Women," the Prologue only is given—but it is the most genuinely Chaucerian part of the poem. Of "The Court of Love," three-fourths are here presented; of "The Assembly of Fowls," "The Cuckoo and the Nightingale," "The Flower and the Leaf," all; of "Chaucer's Dream," one-fourth; of "The House of Fame," two-thirds; and of the minor poems such a selection as may give an idea of Chaucer's power in the "occasional" department of verse. Necessarily, no space whatever could be given to Chaucer's prose works—his translation of Boethius' Treatise

on the Consolation of Philosophy; his *Treatise on the Astrolabe*, written for the use of his son Lewis; and his "*Testament of Love*," composed in his later years, and reflecting the troubles that then beset the poet. If, after studying in a simplified form the salient works of England's first great bard, the reader is tempted to regret that he was not introduced to a wider acquaintance with the author, the purpose of the Editor will have been more than attained.

The plan of the volume does not demand an elaborate examination into the state of our language when Chaucer wrote, or the nice questions of grammatical and metrical structure which conspire with the obsolete orthography to make his poems a sealed book for the masses. The most important element in the proper reading of Chaucer's verses—whether written in the decasyllabic or heroic metre, which he introduced into our literature, or in the octosyllabic measure used with such animated effect in "*The House of Fame*," "*Chaucer's Dream*," &c.—is the sounding of the terminal "e" where it is now silent. That letter is still valid in French poetry; and Chaucer's lines can be scanned only by reading them as we would read Racine's or Molière's. The terminal "e" played an important part in grammar; in many cases it was the sign of the infinitive—the "n" being dropped from the end; at other times it pointed the distinction between singular and plural, between adjective and adverb. The pages that follow, however, being prepared from the modern English point of view, necessarily no account is taken of those distinctions; and the now silent "e" has been retained in the text of Chaucer only when required by the modern spelling, or by the exigencies of metre. In the latter case, which occurs in almost every line, the Editor has followed the plan adopted in Mr Nimmo's Library Edition of *The Canterbury Tales*, by marking with the sign of disresis (as "è") the terminal mute "e" that should be sounded; for example, in these five lines from the opening of *The Canterbury Tales* :—

" Wñen Zè | phýrús | éke wíth | hís swóo | tð | bréath,
 Ínspí | rëd háth | ín éve | rý hòlt | ánd héath
 Thé tén | dér cróp | péa, ánd | thé yún | gð sún
 Háth ín | thé Rám | hís hál | fð còurse | ý-rún,
 Ánd smál | lð fów | lès má | kð mð | lðdy."

Before a word beginning with a vowel, or with the letter "h," the final "e" was almost without exception mute; and in such cases, in the plural forms and infinitives of verbs, the terminal "n" is generally retained for the sake of euphony. The only other mark employed in this edition is the acute accent, used to show where the accentuation of Chaucer's time differed from that of ours—as in the words "*Nature*," "*courage*," "*creature*," "*mannère*" (manner), "*science*," &c.; and to signify that the termination of such words as "*nation*," "*salvation*," "*opinion*," should be pronounced as a dissyllable. No reader who is acquainted with the French language will find it hard to fall into Chaucer's accentuation; while, for such as are not, a simple perusal of the text according to the rules of modern verse, with attention to the nowise formidable accentual marks, should remove every difficulty.

THE POEMS OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

THE CANTERBURY TALES.

THE PROLOGUE.

WHEN that Aprilis, with his showers sweet,¹
The drought of March hath pierced to the root,
And bathed every vein in such licour,
Of which virtúe engender'd is the flower;
When Zephyrus eke with his sweet breath
Inspired hath in every holt² and heath
The tender croppes,³ and the youngé sun
Hath in the Ram⁴ his halfé course y-run,
And smallé fowls maké melody,
That sleepen all the night with open eye,
(So pricketh them natúre in their coráges⁵);
Then longé folk to go on pilgrimages,
And palmers⁶ for to seeké strangé strands,
To ferné hallows outh⁷ in sundry lands;
And specially, from every shiré's end
Of Engleland, to Canterbury they wend,
The holy blissful Martyr for to seek,
That them hath holpen, when that they were
sick.

Befell that, in that season on a day,
In Southwark at the Tabard⁸ as I lay,
Ready to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Canterbury with devout coráge,
At night was come into that hostelry
Well nine and twenty in a company

¹ Sweet. ² Grove, forest. ³ Twigs, boughs.

⁴ Tyrwhitt points out that "the Bull" should be read here, not "the Ram," which would place the time of the pilgrimage in the end of March; whereas, in the Prologue to the Man of Law's Tale, the date is given as the "eight and twenty day Of April, that is messenger to May."

⁵ Hearts, inclinations.

⁶ Dante, in the "Vita Nuova," distinguishes three classes of pilgrims: *palmieri*, palmers, who go beyond sea to the East, and often bring back staves of palm-wood; *peregrini*, who go to the shrine of St Jago in Galicia; *rometi*, who go to Rome. Sir Walter Scott, however, says that palmers were in the habit of passing from shrine to shrine, living on charity; pilgrims, on the other hand, made the journey to any shrine only once, and immediately returned to their ordinary avocations. Chaucer uses "palmer" of all pilgrims.

⁷ To distant saints known, renowned, in sundry lands. "Hallows" survives, in the meaning here given, in

Of sundry folk, by aventure y-fall
In fellowship,⁹ and pilgrims were they all,
That toward Canterbury wouldé ride.
The chambers and the stables weré wide,
And well we weren eased at the best.¹⁰
And shortly, when the sunné was to rest,
So had I spoken with them every one,
That I was of their fellowship anon,
And madé forword¹¹ early for to rise,
To take our way there as I you devise.¹²

But natheless, while I have time and space,
Ere that I farther in this talé pace,
Me thinketh it accordant to reason,
To tell you allé the condition
Of each of them, so as it seemed me,
And which they weren, and of what degree;
And eke in what array that they were in:
And at a Knight then will I first begin.

A KNIGHT there was, and that a worthy man,
That from the timé that he first began
To riden out, he loved chivalry,
Truth and honour, freedom and courtesy.
Full worthy was he in his Lordé's war,
And thereto had he ridden, no man farre,¹³
As well in Christendom as in Heatheness,
And ever honour'd for his worthiness.
At Alisandre¹⁴ he was when it was won.

All-Hallows—All-Saints—Day. "Outh," past participle of "conne" to know, exists in "uncouth."

⁸ The Tabard—the sign of the inn—was a sleeveless coat, worn by heralds. The name of the inn was, some three centuries after Chaucer, changed to the Talbot.

⁹ Who had by chance fallen into company. In "y-fall," "y" is a corruption of the Anglo-Saxon "go" prefixed to participles of verbs; it is used by Chaucer merely to help the metre. In German, "y-fall," or "y-falle," would be "gefallen"; "y-run," or "y-ronne," would be "geronnen."

¹⁰ And we were well accommodated with the best.

¹¹ Foreword, covenant, promise.

¹² Describe, relate.

¹³ Farther.

¹⁴ Alexandria, in Egypt, captured by Pierre de Lusignan, king of Cyprus, in 1365, but abandoned immediately afterwards. Thirteen years before, the same prince had taken Satalie, the ancient Attalia, in Anatolia; and in 1367, he won Layas, in Armenia, both places named just below.

Full often time he had the board begun
 Aboven alls nations in Prusse.¹
 In Lettowe had he reysed,² and in Russe,
 No Christian man so off of his degree.
 In Grenade at the siege eke had he be
 Of Algesir,³ and ridden in Belmarie.⁴
 At Leyes was he, and at Satalie,
 When they were won; and in the Great Sea⁵
 At many a noble army had he be.
 At mortal battles had he been fifteen,
 And foughten for our faith at Tramisene⁶
 In listis thrise, and aye slain his foe.
 This ilk⁷ worthy knight had been also
 Some time with the lord of Palatie,⁸
 Against another heathen in Turkie:
 And evermore he had a sovereign price.⁹
 And though that he was worthy he was wise,
 And of his port as meek as is a maid.
 He never yet no villainy¹⁰ ne said
 In all his life, unto no manner wight.
 He was a very perfect gentle knight.
 But for to tellen you of his array,
 His horse was good, but yet he was not gay.
 Of fustian he weared a gipon,
 Alls besmotted¹¹ with his habergeon,¹²
 For he was late y-come from his voyage,
 And wente for to do his pilgrimage.

With him there was his son, a young¹³ SQUIRE,
 A lover, and a lusty bachelor,
 With lockes crulle¹⁴ as they were laid in press.
 Of twenty year of age he was I gues.
 Of his stature he was of even length,
 And wonderly deliver,¹⁵ and great of strength.
 And he had been some time in chevaschie,¹⁶
 In Flanders, in Artois, and Picardie,
 And borne him well, as of so little space,¹⁷
 In hope to standen in his lady's grace.
 Embroiderd was he, as it were a mead
 All full of freshe flowers, white and red.
 Singing he was, or futing all the day;
 He was as freshe as is the month of May.
 Short was his gown, with sleevs long and wide.
 Well could he sit on horse, and fair¹⁸ ride.
 He coude songes make, and well indite,
 Joust, and eke dance, and well pourtray and write.

¹ Been placed at the head of the table, above knights of all nations, in Prussia, whither warriors from all countries were wont to repair, to aid the Teutonic Order in their continual conflicts with their heathen neighbours in "Lettowe" or Lithuania (German, "Litthauen"), Russia, &c.

² Journeyed, ridden, made campaigns; German, "reisen," to travel.

³ Algesiras, taken from the Moorish king of Grenada, in 1344; the Earls of Derby and Salisbury took part in the siege. Belmarie is supposed to have been a Moorish state in Africa; but "Palmyrie" has been suggested as the correct reading. The Great Sea, or perhaps the Greek sea, is the Eastern Mediterranean. Tramisene, or Tremessen, is enumerated by Froissart among the Moorish kingdoms in Africa. Palatie, or Palastia, in Anatolia, was a fief held by the Christian knights after the Turkish conquests—the holders paying tribute to the infidel. Our knight had fought with one of those lords against a heathen neighbour.

⁴ Ilk, name; compare the Scottish phrase "of that ilk"—that is, of the estate which bears the same name as its owner's title.

⁵ He was held in very high esteem.

⁶ Nothing unbecoming a gentleman.

So hot he loved, that by nightertale¹⁹
 He slept no more than doth the nightingale.
 Courteous he was, lowly, and serviceable,
 And car'd before his father at the table.²⁰

A YEOMAN had he, and servants no mo'
 At that time, for him list ride so;²¹
 And he was clad in coat and hood of green.
 A sheaf of peacock arrows²² bright and keen
 Under his belt he bare full thriftily.
 Well could he dress his tackle yeomanly:
 His arrows drooped not with feathers low;
 And in his hand he bare a mighty bow.
 A nut-head²³ had he, with a brown visage:
 Of wood-craft could²⁴ he well all the usage:
 Upon his arm he bare a gay bracer,²⁵
 And by his side a sword and a buckler,
 And on that other side a gay dagger,
 Harnessed well, and sharp as point of spear:
 A Christopher²⁶ on his breast of silver sheen.
 An horn he bare, the baldric was of green:
 A forster²⁷ was he soothly²⁸ as I gues.

There was also a Nun, a PRIORESS,
 That of her smiling was full simple and coy;
 Her greatest oathe was but by Saint Loy;²⁹
 And she was eloped³⁰ Madame Eglantine.
 Full well she sang the service divine,
 Entuned in her nose full seemly;³¹
 And French she spake full fair and fetially³²
 After the school of Stratford atte Bow,
 For French of Paris was to her unknow.
 At meat³³ was she well y-taught withal;
 She let no morsel from her lippes fall,
 Nor wet her fingers in her sauc³⁴ deesp.
 Well could she carry a morsel, and well
 keep,

That no dropp³⁵ ne fell upon her breast.
 In courtesey was set full much her lest.³⁶
 Her over-lipp³⁷ wiped she so clean,
 That in her cup there was no farthing³⁸ seen
 Of greas³⁹, when she drunken had her draught;
 Full seemly after her meat she raught;⁴⁰
 And sickler⁴¹ she was of great disport,⁴²
 And full pleasant, and amiable of port,
 And pained her to counterfeit⁴³ cheer

⁷ He wore a short doublet, all soiled by the contact of his coat of mail.

⁸ Curled. ⁹ Wonderfully nimble.

¹⁰ Engaged in cavalry expeditions or raids into the enemy's country.

¹¹ Considering the short time he had had.

¹² Night-time.

¹³ It was the custom for squires of the highest degree to carve at their fathers' tables.

¹⁴ For it pleased him so to ride.

¹⁵ Large arrows, with peacocks' feathers.

¹⁶ With nut-brown hair; or, round like a nut, the hair being cut short.

¹⁷ Knew.

¹⁸ Shield for an archer's arm, still called a "bracer," from the French "bras," arm.

¹⁹ A figure of St Christopher, used as a brooch, and supposed to possess the power of charming away danger.

²⁰ Forester.

²¹ Certainly. ²² St Eligins, or Eloy.

²³ Called. ²⁴ In seemly fashion.

²⁵ Properly; Chaucer sneers at the debased Anglo-Norman then taught as French in England.

²⁶ Pleasure.

²⁷ Reached out her hand. ²⁸ Not the least speck.

²⁹ Assuredly she was of a lively disposition.

Of court,¹ and be ecstasie of mannêre,
And to be holden digne² of reverence.

But for to speaken of her conscience,
She was so charitable and so pitous,³
She wouldſ weep if that she saw a mouse
Caught in a trap, if it were dead or bled.
Of smallſ houndſ had she, that she fed
With roasted flesh, and milk, and wastel bread.⁴
But sore she wept if one of them were dead,
Or if men smote it with a yardſ smart:
And all was conscience and tender heart.
Full seemly her wimple y-pinched was;
Her nose tretis;⁵ her eyen gray as glass;⁷
Her mouth full small, and thereto soft and red;
But sicklerly she had a fair forehead.
It was almost a spannſ broad I trow;
For hardily she was not undergrow.⁶
Full fetis⁹ was her cloak, as I was ware.
Of small coral about her arm she bare
A pair of beadſ, gauded all with green;¹⁰
And thereon hung a brooch of gold full shene,
On which was first y-written a crown'd A,
And after, *Amor vincit omnia*.
Another NUN also with her had she,
[That was her chapellſine, and PRIESTſ three.]

A MONK there was, a fair for the mast'ry,¹¹
An out-rider, that loved venery;¹²
A manly man, to be an abbot able.
Full many a dainty horse had he in stable:
And when he rode, men might his bridle hear
Jingeling¹³ in a whistling wind as clear,
And eke as loud, as doth the chapel bell,
There as this lord was keeper of the cell.
The rule of Saint Maur and of Saint Benet,¹⁴
Because that it was old and someſed¹⁵ strait,
This ilkſ¹⁶ monk let oldſ thingſ pace,
And held after the newſ world the trace.
He gave not of the text a pulled hen,¹⁷
That saith, that hunters be not holy men;
Ne that a monk, when he is cloisterless;
Is like to a fish that is waterless;
This is to say, a monk out of his cloister.
This ilkſ text held he not worth an oyster;
And I say his opinion was good.
Why should he study, and make himself
wood,¹⁸
Upon a book in cloister always pore,
Or swinken¹⁹ with his handſ, and labour,
As Austin bit?²⁰ how shall the world be served?
Let Austin have his swink to him reserved.

¹ Took pains to assume a courtly air.

² Worthy; French, "digne."

³ Pitous; full of pity. ⁴ Bread of finest flour.

⁵ Staff, rod. ⁶ Well-formed.

⁷ Gray eyes appear to have been a mark of female beauty in Chaucer's time.

⁸ Certainly she was not of low stature. ⁹ Neat.

¹⁰ A string of beads having the drops, or gaudies, green.
¹¹ Fair above all others; "for the mastery" was applied to medicines in the sense of "sovereign," as we now apply it to a remedy.

¹² A bold rider, fond of hunting—a proclivity of the monks in those days, that occasioned much complaint and satire.

¹³ It was fashionable to hang bells on horses' bridles.

¹⁴ St Benedict was the first founder of a spiritual order in the Roman Church. Maurus, Abbot of Fulda from 822 to 842, did much to re-establish the discipline of the Benedictines on a true Christian basis.

Therefore he was a prikasour aright;²¹
Greyhounds he had as swift as fowl of flight;
Of pricking²² and of hunting for the hare
Was all his lust,²³ for no coat would he spare.
I saw his aleevſ purfil'd at the hand
With gris,²⁴ and that the finest of the land.
And for to fasten his hood under his chin,
He had of gold y-wrought a curious pin;
A love-knot in the greater end there was.
His head was bald, and shone as any glass,
And eke his face, as it had been anoint;
He was a lord full fat and in good point;
His eyen steep,²⁵ and rolling in his head,
That steamed as a furnace of a lead.
His bootſ supple, his horse in great estate,
Now certainly he was a fair prelſte;
He was not pale as a forpined²⁶ ghost;
A fat swan lov'd he best of any roost.
His palfrey was as brown as is a berry.

A FRIAR there was, a wanton and a merry,
A limitour,²⁷ a full solemnſ man.
In all the orders four is none that can²⁸
So much of dalliance and fair language.
He had y-made full many a marriage
Of youngſ women, at his owen cost.
Unto his order he was a noble post;
Full well belov'd, and familiſr was he
With franklins over all²⁹ in his country,
And eke with worthy women of the town:
For he had power of confession,
As said himselfſ, more than a curſte,
For of his order he was licentiate.
Full sweetly heard he confession,
And pleasant was his absolution.
He was an easy man to give penſnce,
There as he wist to have a good pittſnce;³⁰
For unto a poor order for to give
Is signſ that a man is well y-shrive.³¹
For if he gave, he durſt make avant,³²
He wistſ that the man was repentant.
For many a man so hard is of his heart,
He may not weep although him sorſ smart.
Therefore instead of weeping and prayſres,
Men must give silver to the poorſ freres.

His tippet was aye farsed³³ full of knives,
And pinnſs, for to give to fairſ wives;
And certainly he had a merry note:
Well could he sing and playen on a rote;³⁴
Of yeddings³⁵ he bare utterly the prize.
His neck was white as is the fleur-de-lis.

¹⁵ Somewhat.

¹⁶ Same.

¹⁷ He cared nothing for the text.

¹⁸ Mad; Scottish, "wud." Felix says to Paul, "Too much learning hath made thee mad."

¹⁹ Toll hard.

²⁰ As the rules of St Augustine prescribe.

²¹ A right hard rider. ²² Riding. ²³ Pleasure.

²⁴ Worked at the edge with a fur called "gris," or gray. ²⁵ Deep-set. ²⁶ Wasted.

²⁷ A friar with licence or privilege to beg, or exercise other functions, within a certain district: as "the limitour of Holderness." ²⁸ Knows, understands.

²⁹ Everywhere; German, "überall."

³⁰ Where he knew that a liberal dole would be given him.

³¹ Has well made confession. ³² Vaunt, boast.

³³ Stuffed.

³⁴ By rote; from memory.

³⁵ A kind of song; from the Saxon, "gæddian," to sing.

Thereto he strong was as a champion,
 And knew well the taverns in every town.
 And every hosteler and gay tapstère,
 Better than a lazar¹ or a beggère,
 For unto such a worthy man as he
 Accordeth not, as by his faculty,
 To have with such lazars acquaintance.
 It is not honest, it may not advance,
 As for to dealé with no such pouraille,²
 But all with rich, and sellers of vitaille.
 And ov'r all there as³ profit should arise,
 Courteous he was, and lowly of service;
 There n'as no man nowhere⁴ so virtuous:
 He was the besté beggar in all his house:
 And gave a certain farm⁵ for the grant,
 None of his bretheren came in his haunt.
 For though a widow haddé but one shoe,
 So pleasant was his *In principio*,⁶
 Yet would he have a farthing ere he went;
 His purchase was well better than his rent.
 And rage he could and play as any whelp,
 In lovédays;⁷ there could he muchel help.⁸
 For there was he not like a cloisterer,
 With threadbare cope, as is a poor scholer,
 But he was like a master or a pope.
 Of double worsted was his semicope,⁹
 That rounded was as a bell out of press.
 Somewhat he lispéd for his wantonness,
 To make his English sweet upon his tongue;
 And in his harping, when that he had sung,
 His eyen twinkled in his head aright,
 As do the starrés in a frosty night.
 This worthy limitour was call'd Hubárd.

A MERCHANT was there with a forked beard,
 In motley, and high on his horse he sat,
 Upon his head a Flandriah beaver hat.
 His bootés claspéd fair and fetisly.¹⁰
 His reasons aye spake he full solemnly,
 Sounding alway th' increase of his winning.
 He would the sea were kept¹¹ for any thing
 Betwixt Middleburg and Oréwell.¹²
 Well could he in exchangé shieldés¹³ sell.
 This worthy man full well his wit beset;¹⁴
 There wisté no wight that he was in debt,
 So estately was he of governance¹⁵
 With his bargáins, and with his chevisance.¹⁶
 For sooth he was a worthy man withal,
 But sooth to say, I n'ot¹⁷ how men him call.

A CLERK there was of Oxenford¹⁸ also,

¹ A leper.

² Offal, refuse; from the French "pourrir," to rot.

³ In every place where.

⁴ Was nowhere any man.

⁵ Rent; that is, he paid a premium for his licence to beg.

⁶ The first words of Genesis and John, employed in some part of the mass.

⁷ At meetings appointed for friendly settlement of differences; the business was often followed by sports and feasting.

⁸ He was of much service.

⁹ Half or short cloak.

¹⁰ Neatly.

¹¹ He would for anything that the sea were guarded. "The old subsidy of tonnage and poundage," says Tyrwhitt, "was given to the king 'pour la sauvegarde et custodie del mer,'" for the safeguard and keeping of the sea (12 H. IV., c. 3).

¹² Middleburg, at the mouth of the Scheldt, in Holland; Orwell, a seaport in Essex.

That unto logic haddé long y-go.¹⁹
 As leané was his horse as is a rake,
 And he was not right fat, I undertake;
 But looked hollow,²⁰ and thereto soberly.²¹
 Full threadbare was his overest courtopy,²²
 For he had gotten him yet no benefice,
 Ne was not worldly, to have an office.
 For him was lever²³ have at his bed's head
 Twenty bookés, clothed in black or red,
 Of Aristotle, and his philosophy,
 Than robés rich, or fiddle, or psalt'ry.
 But all be that he was a philosopher,
 Yet haddé he but little gold in coffer,
 But all that he might of his friendés hent,²⁴
 On bookés and on learning he it spent,
 And busily gan for the soulés pray
 Of them that gave him wherewith to scholay.²⁵
 Of study took he mosté care and heed.
 Not one word spake he moré than was need;
 And that was said in form and reverence,
 And short and quick, and full of high sentence.
 Sounding in moral virtue was his speech,
 And gladly would he learn, and gladly teach.

A SERGEANT OF THE LAW, wary and wise,
 That often had y-been at the Parvia,²⁶
 There was also, full rich of excellence.
 Discreet he was, and of great reverence:
 He seemed such, his wordés were so wise,
 Justice he was full often in assize,
 By patent, and by plein²⁷ commission;
 For his sciéce, and for his high renown,
 Of fees and robés had he many one.
 So great a purchaser was nowhere none.
 All was fee simple to him, in effect
 His purchasing might not be in suspect.²⁸
 Nowhere so busy a man as he there was,
 And yet he seemed busier than he was.
 In termés had he case' and doomés²⁹ all,
 That from the time of King Will. weré fall.
 Thereto he could indite, and make a thing,
 There couldé no wight pinch at his writing.³⁰
 And every statute coud³¹ he plain by rote.
 He rode but homely in a medley³² coat,
 Girt with a seint³³ of silk, with barrés small;
 Of his array tell I no longer tale.

A FRANKLIN³⁴ was in this company;
 White was his beard, as is the daísy.
 Of his complexion he was sanguine.
 Well lov'd he in the morn a sop in wine.

¹⁹ Crowns, so called from the shields stamped on them; French, "cou;" Italian, "scudo."

²⁰ Emptied.

²¹ In such a dignified way did he manage.

²² Merchandising; conduct of trade; agreement to borrow money.

²³ Know not; wot not.

²⁴ Oxford.

²⁵ Had long gone, devoted himself.

²⁶ Thin.

²⁷ Poorly.

²⁸ His uppermost short cloak.

²⁹ Lifer; rather.

³⁰ Obtain.

³¹ To study, attend school; poor scholars at the universities used then to go about begging for money to maintain them at their studies.

³² The portico of St Paul's, which lawyers frequented to meet their clients.

³³ Full.

³⁴ In suspicion.

³⁵ Judgments.

³⁶ Pick a flaw in what he wrote.

³⁷ Know.

³⁸ Mixed in colour; French, "mêler," to mix.

³⁹ Cincture, sash, girdle; usually ornamented with bars or stripes.

⁴⁰ A large freeholder; a country gentleman.

To liven in delight was ever his won,¹
 For he was Epicurus' owen son,
 That held opinion, that plein² delight
 Was verily felicity perfite.
 An householder, and that a great, was he;
 Saint Julian³ he was in his country.
 His bread, his ale, was alway after one;⁴
 A better envined⁵ man was nowhere none;
 Withouten bake-meat never was his house,
 Of fish and flesh, and that so plentuous,
 It snowed in his house of meat and drink,
 Of alls dainties that men coulds think.
 After the sundry seasons of the year,
 So changed he his meat and his soupere.
 Full many a fat partridge had he in mew,⁶
 And many a bream, and many a luec in stew.⁷
 Woe was his cook, but if⁸ his saucé were
 Poignant and sharp, and ready all his gear.
 His table dormant⁹ in his hall alway
 Stood ready cover'd all the longé day.
 At sessions there was he lord and sire.
 Full often time he was knight of the shire.
 An unlace, and a gipciere¹⁰ all of silk,
 Hung at his girdle, white as morning milk.
 A sheriff had he been, and a countour.¹¹
 Was nowhere such a worthy vavasour.¹²

An HABERDASHER, and a CARPENTER,
 A WEEKE,¹³ a DYER, and a TAPISER,¹⁴
 Were with us eke, cloth'd in one livery,
 Of a sollemn and great fraternity.
 Full fresh and new their gear y-picked¹⁵ was.
 Their knives were y-chaped¹⁶ not with brass,
 Bat all with silver wrought full clean and well,
 Their girdles and their pouches every deal.¹⁷
 Well seemed each of them a fair burgéss,
 To sitten in a guild-hall, on the dais.¹⁸
 Evereach, for the wisdom that he can,¹⁹
 Was shapely²⁰ for to be an alderman.
 For chattels haddé they enough and rent,
 And eke their wivés would it well assent:
 And ellés certain they had been to blame.
 It is full fair to be y-clep'd madáme,
 And for to go to vigils all before,
 And have a mantle royally y-bore.²¹

A COOK they haddé with them for the nones,²²
 To boil the chickens and the marrow bones,
 And powder merohant tart and galingale.²³
 Well could he know a draught of London ale.

¹ Wont, custom. ² Full.
³ The patron saint of hospitality, celebrated for supplying his votaries with good lodging and good cheer. ⁴ Constantly being pressed on one.

⁵ Stored with wine.
⁶ In cage; the place behind Whitehall, where the king's hawks were engorged, was called the Mews.

⁷ Many a pike in his fish-pond; in those Catholic days, when much fish was eaten, no gentleman's mansion was complete without a "stew."

⁸ Unless. ⁹ Fixed, always ready.

¹⁰ A dagger and a purse.

¹¹ Probably a steward or accountant in the county court.

¹² A landholder of consequence; holding of a duke, marquis, or earl, and ranking below a baron.

¹³ Weaver; German, "Weber."

¹⁴ Tapestry-maker; French, "tapisier."

¹⁵ Spruce. ¹⁶ Mounted. ¹⁷ In every part.

¹⁸ On the raised platform at the end of the hall, where sat at meat or in judgment those high in autho-

He couldé roast, and seethe, and broil, and fry,
 Maké mortrewés,²⁴ and well bake a pie.
 But great harm was it, as it thoughté me,
 That on his shin a mormal²⁵ haddé he.
 For blane manger,²⁶ that made he with the best.

A SHIPMAN was there, wonned far by West:²⁷
 For ought I wot, he was of Dartsmouth.
 He rode upon a rouncy, as he couth,²⁸
 All in a gown of falding²⁹ to the knee.
 A dagger hanging by a lace had he
 About his neck under his arm adown;
 The hot summer had made his hue all brown;
 And certainly he was a good fellaw.
 Full many a draught of wine he had y-draw
 From Bourdeaux-ward, while that the chapmen
 sleep;

Of nicé conscience took he no keep.
 If that he fought, and had the higher hand,
 By water he sent them home to every land.
 But of his craft to reckon well his tides,
 His streamés and his strandés him besides,
 His herberow,³⁰ his moon, and lodemanage,³¹
 There was none such, from Hull unto Carthage.
 Hardy he was, and wise, I undertake:
 With many a tempest had his beand been shake.
 He knew well all the havens, as they were,
 From Scotland to the Cape of Finisterre,
 And every creek in Bretagne and in Spain:
 His barge y-cleped was the Magdelain.

With us there was a DOCTOR OF PHYSIC;
 In all this worldé was there none him like
 To speak of physio, and of surgery:
 For he was grounded in astronomy.
 He kept his patient a full great deal
 In hourés by his magic natural.
 Well could he fortuné³² the ascendent
 Of his imáges for his patient.
 He knew the cause of every malady,
 Were it of cold, or hot, or moist, or dry,
 And where engender'd, and of what humoúr.
 He was a very perfect practisour.
 The cause y-know,³³ and of his harm the root,
 Anon he gave to the sick man his boot.³⁴
 Full ready had he his apothecaries,
 To send his druggés and his lectuaries,
 For each of them made other for to win:
 Their friendship was not newé to begin.
 Well knew he the old Esculapius,

city, rank, or honour; in our days the worthy craftsmen might have been described as "good platform men."

¹⁹ Knew. ²⁰ Fitted.

²¹ To take precedence over all in going to the evening service of the Church, or to festival meetings, to which it was the fashion to carry rich cloaks or mantles against the home-coming.

²² The nonce, occasion.

²³ "Poudre marchand tart," some now unknown ingredient used in cookery; "galingale," sweet or long-rooted cyprus.

²⁴ A rich soup made by stamping flesh in a mortar.

²⁵ Gangrene, ulcer.

²⁶ Not what is now known by the name; one part of it was the brawn of a capon.

²⁷ A seaman who dwelt far to the West.

²⁸ On a hack, as he could.

²⁹ Coarse cloth.

³⁰ Harbourage.

³¹ Pilotage; from Anglo-Saxon "ladman," a leader, guide, or pilot; hence "lodestar," "lodestone."

³² Make fortunate. ³³ Known. ³⁴ Remedy.

And Dicoorides, and eke Rufus ;
 Old Hippocras, Hali, and Gallien ;
 Serapion, Rasin, and Arvion ;
 Averrois, Damascene, and Constantin ;
 Bernard, and Gatidsen, and Gilbertin.¹
 Of his diet measurable was he,
 For it was of no superfluity,
 But of great nourishing, and digestible.
 His study was but little on the Bible.
 In sanguine and in perse² he clad was, all
 Lined with taffate, and with sendall.³
 And yet he was but easy of dispence :
 He kept that he won in the pestilence.⁴
 For gold in physio is a cordial ;
 Therefore he loved gold in special.

A good WIFE was there OF besidē BATH,
 But she was somedeal deaf, and that was scath.⁵
 Of cloth-making she haddē such an haunt,⁶
 She passed them of Ypres, and of Gaunt.
 In all the pariah wifē was there none,
 That to the off'ring⁷ before her should gon,
 And if there did, certain so wroth was she,
 That she was out of allē charity.
 Her coverchiefs⁸ werē full fine of ground ;
 I durstē swear, they weighedē ten pound
 That on the Sunday were upon her head.
 Her hosen weren of fine scarlet red,
 Full strait y-tied, and shoes full moist⁹ and new.
 Bold was her face, and fair and red of hue.
 She was a worthy woman all her live,
 Husbands at the church door had she had five,
 Withouten other company in youth ;
 But therof needeth not to speak as nouth.¹⁰
 And thrice had she been at Jerusalem ;
 She haddē passed many a strangē stream ;
 At Romē she had been, and at Bologne,¹¹
 In Galice at Saint James,¹² and at Cologne ;
 She coude¹³ much of wand'ring by the way.
 Gat-toothed¹⁴ was she, soothly for to say.
 Upon an ambler easily she sat,
 Y-wimpled well, and on her head an hat
 As broad as is a bucker or a targe.
 A foot-mantle about her hippēs large,
 And on her feet a pair of spurres sharp.
 In fellowahip well could she laugh and carp.¹⁵
 Of remedies of love she knew perchance,
 For of that art she coude¹³ the oldē dance.

A good man there was of religiōn,
 That was a poorē PARSON of a town :
 But rich he was of holy thought and werk :¹⁶

He was also a learned man, a clerk,
 That Christ's gospel truly wouldē preach.
 His parishens devoutly would he teach.
 Benign he was, and wonder diligent,
 And in adversity full patient :
 And such he was y-proved often sithes.¹⁷
 Full loth were him to ourē for his tithes,
 But rather would he given out of doubt,
 Unto his poorē parishens about,
 Of his offering, and eke of his substance.
 He could in little thing have suffiaunce.¹⁸
 Wide was his pariah, and houses far asunder,
 But he ne left not, for no rain nor thunder,
 In sickness and in mischief to visit
 The farthest in his parish, much and lit,¹⁹
 Upon his feet, and in his hand a staff.
 This noble ensample to his sheep he gaf,²⁰
 That first he wrought, and afterward he taught.
 Out of the gospel he the wordēs caught,
 And this figure he added yet thereto,
 That if gold rustē, what should iron do ?
 For if a priest be foul, on whom we trust,
 No wonder is a lewēd²¹ man to rust :
 And shame it is, if that a priest take keep,
 To see a shitten shepherd and clean sheep :
 Well ought a priest ensample for to give,
 By his own cleanness, how his sheep should live.

He settē not his benefice to hire,
 And left his sheep encumber'd in the mire,
 And ran unto London, unto Saint Poul's,
 To seekē him a chantery²² for souls,
 Or with a brotherhood to be withhold :²³
 But dwelt at home, and keptē well his fold,
 So that the wolf ne made it not miscarry.
 He was a shepherd, and no mercenary.
 And though he holy were, and virtuous,
 He was to sinful men not dispitous.²⁴
 Nor of his speechē dangerous nor dign,²⁵
 But in his teaching discret and benign.
 To drawn folk to heaven, with fairnesse,
 By good ensample, was his business :
 But it were²⁶ any person obstinate,
 What so he were of high or low estate,
 Him would he snibbē²⁷ sharply for the nonēs.²⁸
 A better priest I trow that nowhere none is.
 He waited after no pomp nor reverence,
 Nor maked him a spiced consciēce,²⁹
 But Christ's lore, and his apostles' twelve,
 He taught, and first he follow'd it himselve.

With him there was a PLOUGHMAN, was his
 brother,

¹ The authors mentioned here were the chief medical text-books of the middle ages. The names of Galen and Hippocrates were then usually spelt "Gallien" and "Hypocras" or "Ypocras."

² In red and blue.

³ A fine silk stuff.

⁴ He spent but moderately, keeping the money he had made during the visitation of the plague.

⁵ Damage : pity.

⁶ Skill. The west of England, especially around Bath, was the seat of the cloth-manufacture, as were Ypres and Ghent in Flanders.

⁷ The offering at mass.

⁸ Head-dresses ; Chaucer here satirises the fashion of the time, which piled bulky and heavy waddings on ladies' heads.

⁹ Used in the sense of fresh or new ; as in Latin,

"mustum" signifies new wine ; and Chaucer elsewhere speaks of "moisty ale" as opposed to "old."

¹⁰ Now.

¹¹ Bologna in Italy.

¹² At the shrine of St. James of Compostella in Spain.

¹³ Knew.

¹⁴ Buck-toothed ; goat-toothed, to signify her wantonness ; or gap-toothed—with gaps between her teeth.

¹⁵ Jest, talk.

¹⁶ Work.

¹⁷ Oftentimes.

¹⁸ He was satisfied with very little.

¹⁹ Great and small.

²⁰ Gave.

²¹ Unlearned.

²² An endowment to sing masses for the soul of the donor.

²³ Detained.

²⁴ Severe. ²⁵ Disdainful. ²⁶ But if it were.

²⁷ Reprove ; hence our modern "snub."

²⁸ Nonce, occasion.

²⁹ Double or artificial consciēce.

That had y-laid of dung full many a fother.¹
 A truë swinker² and a good was he,
 Living in peace and perfect charity.
 God loved he bestē with all his heart
 At allē timē, were it gain or smart,³
 And then his neighbōur right as himselve.
 He wouldē thresh, and thereto dike,⁴ and delve,
 For Christē's sake, for every poorē wight,
 Withouthen hire, if it lay in his might.
 His tithēs payed he full fair and well,
 Both of his proper swink, and his chattel.⁵
 In a tabard⁶ he rode upon a mere.

There was also a Reeve, and a Millere,
 A Sompnour, and a Pardoner also,
 A Manciple, and myself, there were no mo'.

The MILLER was a stout carle for the nones,
 Full big he was of brawn, and eke of bones;
 That proved well, for ov'r all wherē⁷ he came,
 At wrestling he would bear away the ram.⁸
 He was short-shouldered, broad, a thickē
 gnarr,⁹

There was no door, that he n'old heave off bar,
 Or break it at a running with his head.
 His beard as any sow or fox was red,
 And thereto broad, as though it were a spade.
 Upon the cop¹⁰ right of his nose he had
 A wart, and thereon stood a tuft of hairs
 Red as the bristles of a sow's ears.
 His nose-thirles¹¹ blackē were and wide.
 A sword and buckler bare he by his side.
 His mouth as widē was as a furnace.
 He was a jangler, and a goliardais,¹²
 And that was most of sin and harlotries.
 Well could he stealē corn, and tollē thrice.
 And yet he had a thumb of gold, pardie.¹³
 A white coat and a blue hood wearēd he.
 A baggēpipe well could he blow and soun',
 And therewithal he brought us out of town.

A gentle MANCIPLE¹⁴ was there of a temple,
 Of which achatours¹⁵ mightē take ensample
 For to be wise in buying of vitaille.
 For whether that he paid, or took by taile,¹⁶
 Algate¹⁷ he waited so in his achate,¹⁸
 That he was aye before in good estate.
 Now is not that of God a full fair grace
 That such a lowēd mannē's wit shall pace¹⁹
 The wisdom of an heap of learned men?
 Of masters had he more than thrisē ten,
 That were of law expert and curious:
 Of which there was a dozen in that house,

¹ Properly a ton; generally, any large quantity.

² Hard worker. ³ Pain, loss. ⁴ Ditch, dig.

⁵ Both of his own labour and his goods.

⁶ Jacket without sleeves. ⁷ Wheresoever.

⁸ The usual prize at wrestling matches.
⁹ Stub or knot in a tree; it describes a thickest strong man. ¹⁰ Head; German, "Kopf."

¹¹ Nostrils; from the Anglo-Saxon, "thirlian," to pierce; hence the word "drill," to bore.

¹² A babblers and a buffoon; Goliath was the founder of a jovial sect called by his name.

¹³ The proverb says that every honest miller has a thumb of gold; probably Chaucer means that this one was as honest as his brethren.

¹⁴ A Manciple—Latin, "maniceps," a purchaser or contractor—was an officer charged with the purchase of victuals for inns of court or colleges.

Worthy to be stewards of rent and land
 Of any lord that is in Engleland,
 To makē him live by his proper good,
 In honour debtless, but if he were wood,²⁰
 Or live as scarcely as him list desire;
 And able for to helpen all a shire
 In any case that mightē fall or hap;
 And yet this Manciple set their aller cap.²¹

The REEVE²² was a slender choleric man,
 His beard was shav'd as nigh as ever he can.
 His hair was by his ears round y-shorn;
 His top was dookēd like a priest befor.
 Full longē were his leggēs, and full lean,
 Y-like a staff, there was no calf y-seen.
 Well could he keep a garner and a bin;²³
 There was no auditor²⁴ could on him win.
 Well wist he by the drought, and by the rain,
 The yielding of his seed and of his grain.
 His lordē's sheep, his neat,²⁵ and his dairy.
 His swine, his horse, his store, and his poultry,
 Were wholly in this Reeve's governing,
 And by his cov'nant gave he reckoning,
 Since that his lord was twenty year of age;
 There could no man bring him in arrears.
 There was no bailiff, herd, nor other hine,²⁶
 That he ne knew his sleight and his covine:²⁷
 They were adrad²⁸ of him, as of the death.
 His wonning²⁹ was full fair upon an heath,
 With greenē trees y-shadow'd was his place.
 He couldē better than his lord purchase.
 Full rich he was y-stored privily.
 His lord well could he pleasē subtly,
 To give and lend him of his owen good,
 And have a thank, and yet³⁰ a coat and hood.
 In youth he learned had a good mistere,³¹
 He was a well good wright, a carpentere.
 This Reeve sate upon a right good stot,³²
 That was all pomely³³ gray, and hightē³⁴ Scot.
 A long surcoat of perse³⁵ upon he had,
 And by his side he bare a rusty blade.
 Of Norfolk was this Reeve, of which I tell,
 Beside a town men clepen Baldeswall.
 Tucked he was, as is a friar, about,
 And ever rode the hinderest of the rout.³⁶

A SOMPNOUR³⁷ was there with us in that place,
 That had a fire-red chernunnēs face,
 For sausefleme³⁸ he was, with eyen narrow.
 As hot he was and lecherous as a sparrow,
 With scalled browēs black, and pillē³⁹ beard:
 Of his visage children were sore afearēd.

¹⁵ Buyers; French, "acheteurs." ¹⁶ On trust.

¹⁷ Always. ¹⁸ Purchase. ¹⁹ Surpass.

²⁰ Unless he were mad.

²¹ Outwitted, made a fool of, them all.

²² A land-steward; still called "grieve"—Anglo-Saxon, "gerefa"—in some parts of Scotland.

²³ A store-place for grain.

²⁴ Examiner of accounts. ²⁵ Cattle.

²⁶ Hind, servant. ²⁷ His tricks and cheating.

²⁸ In dread. ²⁹ Abode. ³⁰ Also.

³¹ Mystery; trade, handicraft.

³² For "stod," a stallion, or steed. ³³ Dapple.

³⁴ Was called. ³⁵ Blue-gray, or sky-blue.

³⁶ The hindermost in the troop or procession.

³⁷ Summoner; apparitor, who cited delinquents to appear in ecclesiastical courts.

³⁸ Red or pimply.

³⁹ Scanty.

There n'as quicksilver, litharge, nor brimstone,
 Boras, ceruse, nor oil of tartar none,
 Nor ointment that wouldē cleanse or bite,
 That him might helpen of his wheelkēs¹ white,
 Nor of the knobbes² sitting on his cheeks.
 Well lov'd he garlic, onions, and leeks,
 And for to drink strong wine as red as blood.
 Then would he speak, and cry as he were wood;
 And when that he well drunken had the wine,
 Then would he speakē no word but Latin.
 A fewē termēs knew he, two or three,
 That he had learned out of some decree;
 No wonder is, he heard it all the day.
 And eke ye knowen well, how that a jay
 Can clepen³ "Wat," as well as can the Pope.
 But whoso would in other thing him grope,⁴
 Then had he spent all his philosophy,
 Aye, *Questio quid juris*,⁵ would he cry.

He was a gentle harlot⁶ and a kind;
 A better fellow should a man not find.
 He wouldē suffer, for a quart of wine,
 A good fellow to have his concubine
 A twelvemonth, and excuse him at the full.
 Full privily a finch eke could he pull.⁷
 And if he found owhere⁸ a good fellow,
 He wouldē teachē him to have none awe
 In such a case of the archdeacon's curse;
 But if⁹ a mannē's soul were in his purse;
 For in his purse he should y-punished be.
 "Purse is the archdeacon's hell," said he.
 But well I wot, he lied right indeed:
 Of cursing ought each guilty man to dread,
 For curse will slay right as assailing¹⁰ saveth;
 And also 'ware him of a *significavit*.¹¹
 In danger had he at his owen guise¹²
 The youngē girlēs of the diocese,
 And knew their counsel, and was of their rede.¹³
 A garland had he set upon his head,
 As great as it were for an alēstake:¹⁴
 A buckler had he made him of a cake.

With him there rode a gentle PARDONERE¹⁵
 Of Ronceval, his friend and his compere,
 That straight was comen from the court of Romē.
 Full loud he sang, "Come hither, lovē, tō me."
 This Sompnour bare to him a stiff burdoun,¹⁶
 Was never trump of half so great a soun'.
 This Pardoner had hair as yellow as wax,
 But smooth it hung, as doth a strike¹⁷ of flax:
 By ounces hung his lockēs that he had,
 And therewith he his shoulders oversprad.
 Full thin it lay, by culpons¹⁸ one and one,
 But hood, for jollity, he weared none,

¹ Pustules, weals.

² Buttons.

³ Call.

⁴ Search.

⁵ A cant law-Latin phrase.

⁶ A low, ribald fellow; the word was used of both sexes; it comes from the Anglo-Saxon verb to hire.

⁷ "Fleece" a man; "pluck a pigeon."

⁸ Anywhere.

⁹ Unless.

¹⁰ Absolving.

¹¹ An ecclesiastical writ.

¹² Within his jurisdiction had he at his own pleasure the young people (of both sexes) in the diocese.

¹³ Counsel.

¹⁴ The post of an alehouse sign; a May pole.

¹⁵ A seller of pardons or indulgences.

¹⁶ Sang the bass.

¹⁷ Streak, strip.

¹⁸ Locks, shreds, little heaps.

¹⁹ The new gait, or fashion; "gait" is still used in this sense in some parts of the country.

For it was trussed up in his wallēt.
 Him thought he rode all of the newē get,¹⁹
 Dishevel, save his cap, he rode all bare.
 Such glaring eyen had he, as an hare.
 A vernicle²⁰ had he sew'd upon his cap.
 His wallet lay before him in his lap,
 Bretful²¹ of pardon come from Rome all hot.
 A voice he had as small as hath a goat.
 No beard had he, nor ever one should have.
 As smooth it was as it were new y-shave;
 I trow he were a gelding or a mare.
 But of his craft, from Berwick unto Ware,
 Ne was there such another pardonere.
 For in his mail²² he had a pillowbere,²³
 Which, as he said, was our Lady's veil:
 He said, he had a gobbet²⁴ of the sail
 That Saintē Peter had, when that he went
 Upon the sea, till Jesus Christ him hent.²⁵
 He had a cross of latoun²⁶ full of stones,
 And in a glass he haddē pigge's bones.
 But with these relics, whennē that he fond
 A poorē parson dwelling upon lond,
 Upon a day he got him more money
 Than that the parson got in moneths tway;
 And thus with feigned flattering and japes,²⁷
 He made the parson and the people his ape.
 But truly to tellen at the last,
 He was in church a noble ecclesiast.
 Well could he read a lesson or a story,
 But alderbest²⁸ he sang an offertory:²⁹
 For well he wistē, when that song was sung,
 He mustē preach, and well asile his tongue,³⁰
 To winnē silver, as he right well could:
 Therefore he sang full merrily and loud.

Now have I told you shortly in a clause
 Th' estate, th' array, the number, and eke the
 cause

Why that assembled was this company
 In Southwark at this gentle hostelry,
 That hightē the Tabard, fast by the Bell.³¹
 But now is timē to you for to tell
 How that we baren us that ilkē night,³²
 When we were in that hostelry alight.
 And after will I tell of our voyage,
 And all the remnant of our pilgrimage.

But first I pray you of your courtesy,
 That ye arette it not my villainy,³³
 Though that I plainly speak in this mattēre.
 To tellen you their wordēs and their cheer;
 Not though I speak their wordēs properly.
 For this ye knowen all so well as I,
 Whoso shall tell a tale after a man,

²⁰ An image of Christ; so called from St Veronica, who gave the Saviour a napkin to wipe the sweat from His face as He bore the Cross, and received it back with an impression of His countenance upon it.

²¹ Brimful.

²² Packet, baggage; French, "malle," a trunk.

²³ Pillow-case.

²⁴ Piece.

²⁵ Took hold of him.

²⁶ Copper, latten.

²⁷ Jests.

²⁸ Alderbest, altherbest, allerbest—best of all.

²⁹ An anthem sung while the congregation made the offering.

³⁰ Polish well his tongue; speak smoothly.

³¹ Apparently another Southwark tavern; Stowe mentions a "Bull" as being near the Tabard.

³² How we bore ourselves—what we did—that same night.

³³ Account it not rudeness in me.

He must rehearse, as nigh as ever he can,
Every word, if it be in his charge,
All speak he¹ ne'er so rudely and so large;
Or elles he must tell his tale untrue,
Or feignè things, or findè wordès new.
He may not spare, although he were his brother;
He must as well say one word as another.
Christ spake Himself full broad in Holy Writ,
And well ye wot no villainy is it.
Eke Plato saith, whoso that can him read,
The wordès must be cousin to the deed.
Also I pray you to forgive it me,
All have I² not set folk in their degree,
Here in this tale, as that they shoulde stand:
My wit is short, ye may well understand.

Great cheerè made our Host us every one,
And to the supper set he us anon:
And served us with victual of the best.
Strong was the wine, and well to drink us lest.³
A seemly man our Hostè was withal
For to have been a marshal in an hall.
A largè man he was with eyen steep,⁴
A fairer burgess is there none in Cheap:⁵
Bold of his speech, and wise and well y-taught,
And of manhoodè lacked him right naught.
Eke thereto was he right a merry man,
And after supper playen he began,
And spake of mirth amonges other things,
When that we haddè made our reckonings;
And saidè thus: "Now, lordingès, truly
Ye be to me welcome right heartily:
For by my troth, if that I shall not lie,
I saw not this year such a company
At once in this herberow,⁶ as is now.
Fain would I do you mirth, an⁷ I wist how.
And of a mirth I am right now bethought,
To do you ease,⁸ and it shall costè nought.
Ye go to Canterbury; God you speed,
The blissful Martyr quitè you your meed;
And well I wot, as ye go by the way,
Ye shapen you⁹ to talken and to play:
For truly comfort nor mirth is none
To ridè by the way as dumb as stone:
And therefore would I makè you disport,
As I said erst, and do you some comfort.
And if you liketh all¹⁰ by one assent
Now for to standen at my judgèment,
And for to worken as I shall you say
To-morrow, when ye riden on the way,
Now by my father's soulè that is dead,
But ye be merry, smiteth off¹¹ mine head.
Hold up your hands withoutè more speech."

Our counsel was not longè for to sech:¹²
Us thought it was not worth to make it wise,¹³
And granted him withoutè more advise,¹⁴
And bade him say his verdict, as him lest.

"Lordings (quoth he), now hearken for the best;

¹ Let him speak. ³ Although I have.

² List, pleased. ⁴ Deep-set.

⁵ Cheapside, then inhabited by the richest and most prosperous citizens of London.

⁶ Lodging, inn; German, "Herberge." ⁷ If.

⁸ Pleasure. ⁹ Prepare yourselves, intend.

¹⁰ If it please you all.

¹¹ If ye be not merry, smite off.

¹² Seek.

But take it not, I pray you, in disdain;
This is the point, to speak it plat¹⁵ and plain.
That each of you, to shorten with your way
In this voyage, shall tellen talès tway,
To Canterbury-ward, I mean it so,
And homeward he shall tellen other two,
Of aventure that whilom have befall.
And which of you that bear'th him best of all,
That is to say, that telleth in this case
Talès of best sentence and most solace,
Shall have a supper at your aller cost.¹⁶
Here in this placè, sitting by this post,
When that ye come again from Canterbury.
And for to makè you the morè merry,
I will myselfè gladly with you ride,
Right at mine owen cost, and be your guide.
And whoso will my judgèment withsay,
Shall pay for all we spenden by the way.
And if ye vouchèsafe that it be so,
Tell me anon withoutè wordès mo',¹⁷
And I will early shapè me therefore."

This thing was granted, and our oath we swore
With full glad heart, and prayed him also,
That he would vouchèsafe for to do so,
And that he wouldè be our governour,
And of our talès judge and reportour,
And set a supper at a certain price;
And we will ruled be at his device,
In high and low: and thus by one assent,
We be accorded to his judgèment.
And thereupon the wine was fet¹⁸ anon.
We drunken, and to restè went each one,
Withouten any longer tarrying.

A-morrow, when the day began to spring,
Up rose our host, and was our aller cock,¹⁹
And gather'd us together in a flock,
And forth we ridden all a little space,
Unto the watering of Saint Thomas:²⁰
And there our host began his horse arrest,
And saidè; "Lordès, hearken if you lest.
Ye weet your forward,²¹ and I it record.
If even-song and morning-song accord,
Let see now who shall tellè the first tale.
As ever may I drinkè wine or ale,
Whoso is rebel to my judgèment,
Shall pay for all that by the way is spent.
Now draw ye cuts, ere that ye farther twin.²²
He which that hath the shortest shall begin."

"Sir Knight (quoth he), my master and my lord,

Now draw the cut, for that is mine accord.
Come near (quoth he), my Lady Prioresse,
And ye, Sir Clerk, let be your shamefastness,
Nor study not: lay hand to, every man."

Anon to drawn every wight began,
And shortly for to tellen as it was,
Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas,²³
The sooth is this, the cut fell to the Knight,
Of which full blithe and glad was every wight;

¹⁵ To make it matter of deliberation; to weigh the proposal carefully. ¹⁶ Consideration. ¹⁷ Flat.

¹⁸ At the cost of you all. ¹⁹ More. ²⁰ Fetched.

²¹ Was the cock to awaken us all.

²² At the second milestone on the old Canterbury road.

²³ Know your promise.

²⁴ Draw lots ere ye go farther.

²⁵ Lot (Latin, "sors"), or chance (Latin, "casus").

And tell he must his tale as was reasón,
By forword, and by composition,
As ye have heard; what needeth wordës mo'?
And when this good man saw that it was so,
As he that wise was and obediënt
To keep his forword by his free assent,
He said; "Sithen¹ I shall begin this game,
Why, welcome be the out in Godde's name.
Now let us ride, and hearken what I say."

And with that word we ridden forth our way;
And he began with right a merry cheer
His tale anon, and said as ye shall hear.

THE KNIGHT'S TALE.²

WHILOM,³ as oldë stories tellen us,
There was a duke that hightë⁴ Theseus.
Of Athens he was lord and governor,
And in his timë such a conqueror
That greater was there none under the sun.
Full many a richë country had he won.
What with his wisdom and his chivalry,
He conquer'd all the regne of Feminie,⁵
That whilom was y-cleped Scythia;
And wedded the Queen Hippolyta,
And brought her home with him to his country
With muchel⁶ glory and great solemnity,
And eke her youngë sister Emily,
And thus with vict'ry and with melody
Let I this worthy Duke to Athens ride,
And all his host, in armës him beside.

And certes, if it n'ere⁷ too long to hear,
I would have told you fully the mannëre,
How wonnen⁸ was the regne of Feminie,
By Theseus, and by his chivalry;
And of the greatë battle for the nonce
Betwixt Athenës and the Amazons;
And how assieged was Hippolyta,
The fairë hardy queen of Scythia;
And of the feast that was at her wedding,
And of the tempest at her homecoming.
But all these things I must as now forbear.
I have, God wot, a largë field to ear;⁹
And weakë be the oxen in my plough;
The remnant of my tale is long enow.
I will not letten eke none of this rout.¹⁰
Let every fellow tell his tale about,
And let see now who shall the supper win.
There as I left,¹¹ I will again begin.

¹ Since.

² For the plan and principal incidents of the "Knight's Tale," Chaucer was indebted to Boccaccio, who had himself borrowed from some prior poet, chronicler, or romancer. Boccaccio speaks of the story as "very ancient;" and, though that may not be proof of its antiquity, it certainly shows that he took it from an earlier writer. The "Tale" is more or less a paraphrase of Boccaccio's "Theseida;" but in some points the copy has a distinct dramatic superiority over the original. The "Theseida" contained ten thousand lines; Chaucer has condensed it into less than one-fourth of the number. The "Knight's Tale" is supposed to have been at first composed as a separate work; it is undetermined whether Chaucer took it direct from the Italian of Boccaccio, or from a French translation. ³ Once on a while; formerly.

⁴ Was called; from the Anglo-Saxon, "hatan," "to bid or call; German, "heissen," "heisst."

This Duke, of whom I makë mentioün,
When he was come almost unto the town,
In all his weal¹² and in his mostë pride,
He was ware, as he cast his eye aside,
Where that there kneeled in the highë way
A company of ladies, tway and tway,
Each after other, clad in clothës black:
But such a cry and such a woe they make,
That in this world n'is creature living,
That heardë such another waimenting.¹³
And of this crying would they never stenten,¹⁴
Till they the reinës of his bridle henten.¹⁵
"What folk be ye that at mine homecoming
Perturben so my feastë with crying?"
Quoth Theseus; "Have ye so great envy
Of mine honoür, that thus complain and cry?
Or who hath you misboden,¹⁶ or offended?
Do tellë me, if it may be amended;
And why that ye be clad thus all in black?"

The oldest lady of them all then spake,
When she had swooned, with a deadly cheer,¹⁷
That it was ruthë¹⁸ for to see or hear.
She said; "Lord, to whom fortune hath given
Vict'ry, and as a conqueror to liven,
Nought grieveth us your glory and your honoür;
But we beseechen mercy and succour.
Have mercy on our woe and our distress;
Some drop of pity, through thy gentleness,
Upon us wretched women let now fall.
For certës, lord, there is none of us all
That hath not been a duchess or a queen;
Now be we caitives,¹⁹ as it is well seen:
Thanked be Fortune, and her falsë wheel,
That none estate ensurëth to be wele.²⁰
And certes, lord, t' abide your presënce
Here in this temple of the goddess Clemence
We have been waiting all this fortënight:
Now help us, lord, since it lies in thy might.

"I, wretched wight, that weep and wallë
thus,
Was whilom wife to king Capaneus,
That starf²¹ at Thebes, cursed be that day:
And allë we that be in this array,
And maken all this lamentatioün,
We losten all our husbands at that town,
While that the siegë theresabouten lay.
And yet the oldë Creon, wallaway!
That lord is now of Thebes the city,
Fulfilled of ire and of iniquity,
He for despitë, and for his tyranny,
To do the deadë bodies villainy,²²

⁵ The "Royaume des Femmes"—kingdom of the Amazons. Gower, in the "Confessio Amantis," styles Penthelëia the "Queen of Feminie."

⁶ Much, great.

⁷ If it were not.

⁸ Won, conquered; German, "gewonnen."

⁹ To plough; Latin, "arare." "I have abundant matter for discourse." The first, and half of the second, of Boccaccio's twelve books are disposed of in the few lines foregoing.

¹⁰ Nor will I hinder any of this company.

¹¹ Where I left off.

¹² Prosperity, wealth.

¹³ Bewailing, lamenting; German, "wehklagen."

¹⁴ Stint, cease, desist.

¹⁵ Betsy.

¹⁶ Wronged.

¹⁷ Aspect, countenance.

¹⁸ Pity.

¹⁹ Captives or slaves; hence it means generally in wretched circumstances.

²⁰ That assures no continuance of prosperous estate.

²¹ Died; German, "sterben," "starb."

²² Outrage, insult.

Of all our lordes, which that been y-slaw,¹
 Hath all the bodies on an heap y-draw,
 And will not suffer them by none assent
 Neither to be y-buried, nor y-brant,²
 But maketh houndes eat them in despite."
 And with that word, withoute more respite
 They fallen groff,³ and cryden piteously;
 "Have on us wretched women some mercy,
 And let our sorrow sinken in thine heart."

This gentle Duke down from his courser start
 With hearte piteous, when he heard them speak.
 Him thoughte that his heart would all to-break,
 When he saw them so piteous and so mate,⁴
 That whilom weren of so great estate.
 And in his armes he them all up hent,⁵
 And them comforted in full good intent,
 And swore his oath, as he was true knight,
 He would do so farforthly his might⁶
 Upon the tyrant Creon them to wreak,⁷
 That all the people of Grece should speak,
 How Creon was of Theseus y-served,
 As he that had his death full well deserved.
 And right anon withoute more abode⁸
 His banner he display'd, and forth he rode
 To Thebes-ward, and all his host beside:
 No ner⁹ Athenes would he go nor ride,
 Nor take his ease fully half a day,
 But onward on his way that night he lay:
 And sent anon Hippolyta the queen,
 And Emily her younge sister sheen¹⁰
 Unto the town of Athens for to dwell:
 And forth he rit;¹¹ there is no more to tell.

The red statue of Mars with spear and targe
 So shineth in his white banner large,
 That all the fieldes glitter up and down:
 And by his banner borne is his pennon
 Of gold full rich, in which there was y-beat¹²
 The Minotaur¹³ which that he slew in Crete.
 Thus rit this Duke, thus rit this conquerour,
 And in his host of chivalry the flower,
 Till that he came to Thebes, and alight
 Fair in a field, there as he thought to fight.
 But shortly for to speaken of this thing,
 With Creon, which that was of Thebes king,
 He fought, and slew him manly as a knight
 In plain bataille, and put his folk to flight:
 And by assault he won the city after,
 And rent adown both wall, and spar, and rafter;
 And to the ladies he restored again
 The bodies of their husbands that were slain,
 To do obsequies, as was then the guise.¹⁴

But it were all too long for to devise¹⁵
 The great clamour, and the wailingment,¹⁶
 Which that the ladies made at the burning¹⁷
 Of the bodies, and the great honour
 That Theseus the noble conqueror

Did to the ladies, when they from him went:
 But shortly for to tell is mine intent.

When that this worthy Duke, this Theseus,
 Had Creon slain, and wonnen Thebes thus,
 Still in the field he took all night his rest,
 And did with all the country as him lest.¹⁸
 To ransack in the tas¹⁹ of bodies dead,
 Them for to strip of harness and of weed,²⁰
 The pillars²¹ did their business and cure,
 After the battle and diacomfiture.
 And so befell, that in the tas they found,
 Through girt with many a grievous bloody
 wound,

Two young knights liggng by and by²²
 Both in one armes,²³ wrought full richly:
 Of which two, Arcite hight that one,
 And he that other highte Palamon.
 Not fully quick, nor fully dead they were,
 But by their coat-armour, and by their gear,
 The heralds knew them well in special,
 As those that weren of the blood royal
 Of Thebes, and of sistren two y-born.²⁴
 Out of the tas the pillars have them torn,
 And have them carried soft unto the tent
 Of Theseus, and he full soon them sent
 To Athens, for to dwellen in prison
 Perpetually, he n'old no ransom.²⁵
 And when this worthy Duke had thus y-done,
 He took his host, and home he rit anon
 With laurel crowned as a conquerour;
 And there he lived in joy and in honour
 Term of his life;²⁶ what needeth wordes mo'?
 And in a tower, in anguish and in woe,
 Dwellen this Palamon, and eke Arcite,
 For evermore, there may no gold them quite.²⁷

Thus passed year by year, and day by day,
 Till it fell ones in a morn of May
 That Emily, that fairer was to seen
 Than is the lily upon his stalk green,
 And fresher than the May with flowers new
 (For with the rose colour strove her hue;
 I n'ot²⁸ which was the finer of them two),
 Ere it was day, as she was wont to do,
 She was arisen, and all ready dight.²⁹
 For May will have no sluggardy a-night;
 The season pricketh every gentle heart,
 And maketh him out of his sleep to start,
 And saith, "Arise, and do thine observance."

This maketh Emily have remembrance
 To do honour to May, and for to rise.
 Y-clothed was she fresh for to devise;
 Her yellow hair was braided in a tress,
 Behind her back, a yard long I guess.
 And in the garden at the sun uprist³⁰
 She walketh up and down where as her list.
 She gathereth flowers, party³¹ white and red,

¹ Slain.

² Burnt.

³ Flat on the ground; grovelling on the earth.

⁴ Abased, dejected, consumed away.

⁵ Raised, took.

⁶ As far as his power went; all that in him lay.

⁷ Revenge.

⁸ Delay.

⁹ "Ner" or "nerre," is used as the comparative of "ner," near, instead of "nearer."

¹⁰ Bright, lovely.

¹¹ Rode.

¹² Stamped.

¹³ The monster, half-man and half-bull, which yearly devoured a tribute of fourteen Athenian youths and maidens, until it was slain by Theseus.

¹⁴ Custom.

¹⁵ Describe.

¹⁶ Lamenting.

¹⁷ Burning.

¹⁸ List, pleased.

¹⁹ Heap; French, "tas."

²⁰ Of armour and clothing.

²¹ Pillagers, strippers; French, "pilleurs."

²² Lying side by side.

²³ Armour of the same fashion.

²⁴ Born of two sisters.

²⁵ He would take no ransom.

²⁶ For the rest of his life.

²⁷ Wet not, know not.

²⁸ Sunrise.

²⁹ Set free.

³⁰ Decked, dressed.

³¹ Mingled.

To make a sotel¹ garland for her head,
And as an angel heavenly she sung.
The great² tower, that was so thick and strong,
Which of the castle was the chief dungeon³
(Where as these knightes weren in prison,
Of which I told⁴ you, and tell⁵ shall),
Was even jointant⁶ to the garden wall,
There as this Emily had her playing.

Bright was the sun, and clear that morrowning,
And Palamon, this woful prisoner,
As was his wont, by leave of his gaoler,
Was ris'n, and roamed in a chamber on high,
In which he all the noble city sigh,⁴
And eke the garden, full of branches green,
There as this fresh Emelia the sheen
Was in her walk, and roamed up and down.
This sorrowful prisoner, this Palamon
Went in his chamber roaming to and fro,
And to himself complaining of his woe:
That he was born, full oft he said, Alas!
And so befell, by aventure or cas,⁵
That through a window thick of many a bar
Of iron great, and square as any spar,
He cast his eyes upon Emelia,
And therewithal he blent⁶ and cried, Ah!
As though he stungen were unto the heart.
And with that cry Arcite anon up start,
And said, "Cousin mine, what aileth thee,
That art so pale and deadly for to see?
Why cried'st thou? who hath thee done offence?
For Godd⁷'s love, take all in patience
Our prison,⁷ for it may none other be.
Fortune hath giv'n us this adversity.
Some wick'⁸ aspect or disposition
Of Saturn, by some constellati⁹on,
Hath giv'n us this, although we had it sworn,
So stood the heaven when that we were born,
We must endure; this is the short and plain."

This Palamon answer'd, and said again:
"Cousin, forsooth of this opini¹⁰on
Thou hast a vain imaginati¹¹on.
This prison caused me not for to cry;
But I was hurt right now thorough mine eye
Into mine heart; that will my ban⁹ be.
The fairness of the lady that I see
Yond in the garden roaming to and fro,
Is cause of all my crying and my woe.
I n¹²ot whe'r¹⁰ she be woman or godd¹³ess.
But Venus is it, soothly¹¹ as I guess."
And therewithal on knees adown he fell,
And said: "Venus, if it be your will
You in this garden thus to transfigure,
Before me sorrowful wretched creature,
Out of this prison help that we may scape.
And if so be our destiny be shape

By etern word to dien in pris¹⁴on,
Of our lineage have some compassi¹⁵on,
That is so low y-brought by tyranny."

And with that word Arcite gan espy¹²
Where as this lady roamed to and fro.
And with that sight her beauty hurt him so,
That if that Palamon was wounded sore,
Arcite is hurt as much as he, or more.
And with a sigh he said¹³ piteously:
"The fresh¹⁶ beauty slay'th me suddenly
Of her that roameth yonder in the place.
And but¹² I have her mercy and her grace,
That I may see her at the least¹⁷ way,
I am but dead; there is no more to say."
This Palamon, when he these word¹⁸es heard,
Dispiteously¹⁴ he looked, and answer'd:
"Whether say'st thou this in earnest or in
play?"

"Nay," quoth Arcite, "in earnest, by my fay.¹⁵
God help me so, me lust full ill to play."¹⁶
This Palamon gan knit his brow¹⁹es tway.
"It were," quoth he, "to thee no great honour
For to be false, nor for to be traitour
To me, that am thy cousin and thy brother
Y-sworn full deep, and each of us to other,
That never for to dien in the pain.¹⁷
Till that the death departen shall us twain,
Neither of us in love to hinder other,
Nor in none other case, my lev¹⁸er brother;
But that thou shouldest truly farther me
In every case, as I should farther thee.
This was thine oath, and mine also cert¹⁹ain;
I wot it well, thou dar'st it not withsayn.¹⁵
Thus art thou of my counsel out of doubt.
And now thou wouldest falsely be about
To love my lady, whom I love and serve,
And ever shall, until mine heart²⁰ sterve.
Now certes, false Arcite, thou shalt not so.
I lov'd her first, and told²¹de thee my woe
As to my counsel, and my brother sworn
To farther me, as I have told befor.
For which thou art y-bounden as a knight
To help²² me, if it lie in thy might,
Or ell²³es art thou false, I dare well sayn."

This Arcite full proudly spake again:
"Thou shalt," quoth he, "be rather²¹ false
than I,
And thou art false, I tell thee utterly;
For par amour I lov'd her first ere thou.
What wilt thou say? thou wist it not right
now²²
Whether she be a woman or godd²³ess.
Thine is affecti²⁴on of holiness,
And mine is love, as to a creature:
For which I told²⁵de thee mine aventure

¹ Subtle, well-arranged.

² The donjon was originally the central tower or "keep" of feudal castles; it was employed to detain prisoners of importance. Hence the modern meaning of the word dungeon.

³ Adjoining.

⁴ Saw.

⁵ Chance.

⁶ Stop, start aside.

⁷ Imprisonment.

⁸ Wicked; Saturn, in the old astrology, was a most unpropitious star to be born under.

⁹ Ruin, destruction.

¹⁰ Know not whether.

¹¹ Assuredly, truly.

¹² Began to look forth.

¹³ Unless.

¹⁴ Despitefully, angrily.

¹⁵ By my faith; Spanish, "fé"; French, "foi."

¹⁶ I am in no humour for jesting.

¹⁷ To die in the pain was a proverbial expression in the French, used as an alternative to enforce a resolution or a promise. Edward III., according to Froissart, declared that he would either succeed in the war against France or die in the pain—"Ou il mourroit en la peine." It was the fashion in those times to swear oaths of friendship and brotherhood; and hence, though the fashion has long died out, we still speak of "sworn friends."

¹⁸ Loved, dear; German, "lieber."

¹⁹ Gainsay, deny.

²⁰ Die.

²¹ Sooner.

²² Even now thou knowest not.

As to my cousin, and my brother sworn.
I post,¹ that thou loved'st her before:
Wost² thou not well the old clerk's saw,³
That who shall give a lover any law?
Love is a greater law, by my pan,⁴
Than may be giv'n to any earthly man:
Therefore positive law, and such decree,
Is broke alway for love in each degree.
A man must needs love, maner his head.⁵
He may not flee it, though he should be dead.
All be she⁶ maid, or widow, or else wife.
And eke it is not likely all thy life
To standen in her grace, no more than I:
For well thou wost thyself verily,
That thou and I be damned to prison
Perpetual, us gaineth no ransom.
We strive, as did the houndes for the bone;
They fought all day, and yet their part was
none.

There came a kite, while that they were so
wroth,

And bare away the bone betwixt them both.
And therefore at the king's court, my brother,
Each man for himself, there is none other.
Love if thee list; for I love and aye shall:
And soothly, levē brother, this is all.
Here in this prison musten we endure,
And each of us takē his aventure.⁷

Great was the strife and long betwixt them
tway,

If that I haddē leisure for to say;
But to the effect: it happen'd on a day
(To tell it you as shortly as I may),
A worthy duke that hight Perithous,
That fellow was to this Duke Theseus⁸
Since thilkē⁹ day that they were children lite,⁹
Was come to Athens, his fellow to visite,
And for to play, as he was wont to do;
For in this world he loved no man so:
And he lov'd him as tenderly again.
So well they lov'd, as old bookēs sayn,
That when that one was dead, soothly to tell,
His fellow went and sought him down in hell:
But of that story list me not to write.
Duke Perithous loved well Arcite,
And had him known at Thebes year by year:
And finally at request and prayere
Of Perithous, withoutē ransom
Duke Theseus him let out of prison,
Freely to go, where him list over all,
In such a guise, as I you tellen shall.
This was the forword,¹⁰ plainly to indite,
Betwixt Theseus and him Arcite:
That if so were, that Arcite were y-found
Ever in his life, by day or night, one stound¹¹

¹ Suppose.

² Know'st.

³ The saying of the old scholar—Boethius, in his treatise "De Consolatione Philosophie," which Chaucer translated, and from which he has freely borrowed in his poetry. The words are

"Quis legem det amantibus?

Major lex amor est sibi."

⁴ Head.

⁵ In spite of his head.

⁶ Whether the woman he loves be.

⁷ "Perithous" and "Theseus" must, for the metre, be pronounced as words of four and three syllables respectively—the vowels at the end not being diphthongated, but enunciated separately, as if the words were printed "Perithōūs," "Thēsēs." The same

In any country of this Theseus,
And he were caught, it was accorded thus,
That with a sword he should lose his head;
There was none other remedy nor rede.¹²
But took his leave, and homeward he him sped;
Let him beware, his neck lieth to wed.¹³

How great a sorrow suffreth now Arcite!
The death he feeleth through his heart's smite;
He weepeth, wailleth, crieth piteously;
To slay himself he waiteth privily.
He said; "Alas the day that I was born!
Now is my prison worse than before:
Now is me shape¹⁴ eternally to dwell
Not in purgatory, but right in hell.
Alas! that ever I knew Perithous.
For ellās had I dwelt with Theseus
Y-fettered in his prison evermo'.

Then had I been in bliss, and not in woe.
Only the sight of her, whom that I serve,
Though that I never may her grace deserve,
Would have sufficed right enough for me.
O dearē cousin Palamon," quoth he,
"Thine is the vict'ry of this aventure,
Full blissfully in prison to endure:
In prison? nay certes, in paradise.
Well hath fortune y-turned thee the dice,
That hast the sight of her, and I th' absence.
For possible is, since thou hast her presence,
And art a knight, a worthy and an able,
That by some cas,¹⁵ since fortune is changeable,
Thou may'st to thy desire sometime attain.
But I that am exiled, and barrēn
Of all grace, and in so great despair,
That there n'is earth, water, fire, nor air,
Nor creature, that of them maked is,
That may me help nor comfort in this,
Well ought I sterve in wanhope¹⁶ and distress.
Farewell my life, my lust,¹⁷ and my gladness.
Alas, why plainen men so in commūne
Of purveyance of God,¹⁸ or of Fortune,
That giveth them full oft in many a guise
Well better than they can themselves devise?
Some man desireth for to have richēs,
That cause is of his murder or great sickness.
And some man would out of his prison fain,
That in his house is of his meinie¹⁹ alain.
Infinite harmēs be in this mattere.
We wot never what thing we pray for here.
We fare as he that drunk is as a mouse.
A drunken man wot well he hath an house,
But he wot not which is the right way thither,
And to a drunken man the way is slither.²⁰
And certes in this world so farē we.
We seekē fast after felicity,
But we go wrong full often truly.

rule applies in such words as "creature" and "conscience," which are trisyllables.

⁸ That.

⁹ Little.

¹⁰ Covenant, promise.

¹¹ Moment, short space of time; from Anglo-Saxon, "stand;" akin to which is German, "Stunde," an hour.

¹² Counsel.

¹³ In pledge, pawn.

¹⁴ It is shaped, decreed, fixed for me.

¹⁵ Chance.

¹⁶ Die in despair; in want of hope.

¹⁷ Pleasure.

¹⁸ Why do men so often complain of God's providence?

¹⁹ Household; menials, or servants, &c., dwelling together in a house; from an Anglo-Saxon word meaning a crowd. Compare German, "Menge," multitude.

²⁰ Or "slider," slippery.

Thus we may sayen all, and namely¹ I,
That ween'd,² and had a great opiniõ,
That if I might escapè from prisõ
Then had I been in joy and perfect heal,
Where now I am exiled from my weal.
Since that I may not see you, Emily,
I am but dead; there is no remedy."

Upon that other sidè, Palamon,
When that he wist Arcite was agone,
Such sorrow maketh, that the greatè tower
Resounded of his yelling and clamour.
The purè fetters³ on his shinnis great
Were of his bitter saltè tearis wet.

"Alas!" quoth he, "Arcite, cousin mine,
Of all our strife, God wot, the fruit is thine.
Thou walkest now in Thebes at thy large,
And of my woe thou givest little charge.⁴
Thou mayst, since thou hast wisdom and man-
head,⁵

Assemble all the folk of our kindred,
And make a war so sharp on this country,
That by some aventure, or some treaty,
Thou mayst have her to lady and to wife,
For whom that I must needis lose my life.
For as by way of possibility,
Since thou art at thy large, of prison free,
And art a lord, great is thine advantage,
More than is mine, that sterve⁶ here in a cage.
For I must weep and wail, while that I live,
With all the woe that prison may me give,
And eke with pain that love me gives also,
That doubles all my torment and my woe."

Therewith the fire of jealousy upstart
Within his breast, and hent him by the heart
So woody,⁷ that he like was to behold
The box-tree, or the ashes dead and cold.
Then said; "O cruel goddess, that govern
This world with binding of your word etern,⁸
And writen in the table of adamant
Your parlement⁹ and your eternal grant,
What is mankind more unto you y-hold?¹⁰
Than is the sheep, that rouketh¹¹ in the fold!
For alain is man, right as another beast,
And dwelleth eke in prison and arrest,
And hath sicknès, and great adversity,
And oftentimes guiltless, pardie.¹²
What governance is in your prescience,
That guiltless tormenteth innocence?
And yet increaseth this all my penance,
That man is bounden to his observance
For Goddè's sake to letten of his will,¹³
Whereas a beast may all his lust¹⁴ fulfil.
And when a beast is dead, he hath no pain;
But man after his death must weep and plain,

¹ Especially I; I for instance.

² Thought.

³ The very fetters. The Greeks used *καὶ ἄρα*, the Romans "purus" in the same sense.

⁴ Takest little heed.

⁵ Manhood, courage.

⁶ Perish, die.

⁷ Seised so madly upon his heart.

⁸ Eternal.

⁹ Consultation.

¹⁰ More by you esteemed.

¹¹ Lie huddled together, sleep.

¹² Par Dieu—by God.

¹³ Restrain his desire.

¹⁴ Pleasure.

¹⁵ Pain, trouble; French, "peine."

¹⁶ Mad.

¹⁷ Stint, pause.

¹⁸ Little.

¹⁹ Know not.

²⁰ Condition.

²¹ On peril of his head.

²² In the mediæval courts of love, to which allusion

Though in this worldè he have care and woe:
Withoutè doubt it mayè standen so.

"The answer of this leave I to divinès,
But well I wot, that in this world great pine¹⁵ is:
Alas! I see a serpent or a thief
That many a truè man hath done mischief,
Go at his large, and where him list may turn.
But I must be in prison through Saturn,
And eke through Juno, jealous and eke wood,¹⁶
That hath well nigh destroyed all the blood
Of Thebes, with his wastè wallès wide.
And Venus slayth me on that other side
For jealousy, and fear of him, Arcite."

Now will I stent¹⁷ of Palamon a lite,¹⁸
And let him in his prison stillè dwell,
And of Arcite forth I will you tell.
The summer passeth, and the nightès long
Increasè double-wise the painès strong
Both of the lover and the prisonère.
I n'ot¹⁹ which hath the wofuller mistère.²⁰
For, shortly for to say, this Palamon
Perpetually is damned to prisõ,
In chainès and in fetters to be dead;
And Arcite is exiled on his head²¹
For evermore as out of that country,
Nor never more he shall his lady see.
You lovers ask I now this question,²²
Who hath the worse, Arcite or Palamon?
The one may see his lady day by day,
But in prison he dwellè must alway.
The other where him list may ride or go,
But see his lady shall he never mo'.
Now deem all as you listè, ye that can,
For I will tell you forth as I began.

When that Arcite to Thebes comen was,
Full oft a day he swelt,²³ and said, "Alas!"
For see his lady shall he never mo'.
And shortly to concluden all his woe,
So much sorrow had never creatüre
That is or shall be while the world may dure.
His sleep, his meat, his drink is him byraft,²⁴
That lean he wex,²⁵ and dry as any shaft.²⁶
His eyen hollow, grisly to behold,
His hue fallow,²⁷ and pale as ashes cold,
And solitary he was, ever alone,
And wailing all the night, making his moan.
And if he heardè song or instrument,
Then would he weepen, he might not be stent.²⁸
So feeble were his spirite, and so low,
And changed so, that no man couldè know
His speech, neither his voice, though man it heard.
And in his gear²⁹ for all the world he far'd
Not only like the lovers' malady
Of Eros, but rather y-like manie,³⁰

is probably made forty lines before, in the word "parlement" or "parliament" questions like that here proposed were seriously discussed.

¹⁵ Fainted, died. ¹⁶ Bereft, taken away, from him.

¹⁷ Became, waxed.

¹⁸ Arrow. The phrase is equivalent to our "dry as a bone."

¹⁹ Yellow; old spelling "faiwe," French "fauve," tawny-coloured. Some editions have "sallow."

²⁰ Stinted, stopped.

²¹ Behaviour, fashion, dress; but, by another reading, the word is "gyre," and means fit, trance—from the Latin, "gyro," I turn round.

²² Mania, madness.

Engender'd of humours melancholic,
Before his head in his cell fantastic.¹
And shortly turned was all upside down,
Both habit and eke disposition,
Of him, this woful lover Dan² Arcite.
Why should I all day of his woe indite?
When he endured had a year or two
This cruel torment, and this pain and woe,
At Thebes, in his country, as I said,
Upon a night in sleep as he him laid,
Him thought how that the winged god Mercury
Before him stood, and bade him to be merry.
His sleepy yard³ in hand he bare upright;
A hat he wore upon his hairs bright.
Arrayed was this god (as he took keep)⁴
As he was when that Argus⁵ took his sleep;
And said him thus: "To Athens shalt thou
wend;"⁶

There is thee shapen⁷ of thy woe an end."
And with that word Arcite woke and start.
"Now truly how sore that e'er me smart."
Quoth he, "to Athens right now will I fare.
Nor for no dread of death shall I not spare
To see my lady that I love and serve;
In her presence I reck not to starve."⁸
And with that word he caught a great mirror,
And saw that changed was all his colour,
And saw his visage all in other kind.
And right anon it ran him in his mind,
That since his face was so disfigur'd
Of malady the which he had endur'd,
He might well, if that he bare him low,⁹
Live in Athens evermore unknow,
And see his lady wellnigh day by day.
And right anon he changed his array,
And clad him as a poor labourer.
And all alone, save only a squire,
That knew his privy¹⁰ and all his cas,¹¹
Which was disguised poorly as he was,
To Athens is he gone the next¹² way.
And to the court he went upon a day,
And at the gate he proffer'd his service,
To drudge and draw, what so men would devise.¹³
And, shortly of this matter for to sayn,
He fell in office with a chamberlain,
The which that dwelling was with Emily.
For he was wise, and could soon espy
Of every servant which that served her.
Well could he hew wood, and water bear,
For he was young and mighty for the nonce,¹⁴
And thereto he was strong and big of bones
To do that any wight can him devise.

A year or two he was in this service,
Page of the chamber of Emily the bright;
And Philostrate he said that he hight.

¹ In front of his head in his fantastic cell. "The division of the brain into cells, according to the different sensitive faculties," says Mr Wright, "is very ancient, and is found depicted in mediæval manuscripts." In a manuscript in the Harleyan Library, it is stated, "Certum est in prona cerebri esse fantasiam, in medio rationem discretivam, in puppi memoriam"—a classification not materially differing from that of modern phrenologists. ² "Dominus." Lord; Spanish. "Don." ³ Rod; the "caduceus." ⁴ Heed, notice.

⁵ Argus was employed by Juno to watch Io with his hundred eyes; but he was set to sleep by the fute of Mercury, who then cut off his head.

⁶ Go.

⁷ Fixed, prepared.

⁸ Die.

But half so well belov'd a man as he
Ne was there never in court of his degree.
He was so gentle of condition,
That throughout all the court was his renown.
They said that it were a charity
That Theseus would enhance his degree,¹⁵
And put him in some worshipful service,
There as he might his virtue exercise.
And thus within a while his namé sprung
Both of his deedes, and of his good tongue,
That Theseus hath taken him so near,
That of his chamber he hath made him squire,
And gave him gold to maintain his degree;
And eke man brought him out of his country
From year to year full privily his rent.
But honestly and alyly¹⁶ he it spent,
That no man wonder'd how that he it had.
And three year in this wise his life he led,¹⁷
And bare him so in peace and eke in werre,¹⁸
There was no man that Theseus had so derre.¹⁹
And in this bliss leave I now Arcite,
And speak I will of Palamon a lite.²⁰

In darkness horrible, and strong prison,
This seven year hath sitten Palamon,
Forpined,²¹ what for love, and for distress.
Who feeleth double sorrow and heaviness
But Palamon? that love distraineth²² so,
That wood²³ out of his wite he went for woe,
And eke thereto he is a prisoner
Perpetual, not only for a year.
Who could rhyme in English properly
His martyrdom? forsooth, it am not I;²⁴
Therefore I pass as lightly as I may.
It fell that in the seventh year, in May
The third night (as old bookes sayn,
That all this story tellen more plain),
Were it by aventure or destiny
(As, when a thing is shapen²⁵ it shall be),
That, soon after the midnight, Palamon
By helping of a friend brake his prison,
And fled the city fast as he might go,
For he had given drink his gaoler so
Of a clary,²⁶ made of a certain wine,
With narcotics and opie²⁷ of Thebes fine,
That all the night, though that men would him
shake,

The gaoler slept, he might not awake:
And thus he fled as fast as ever he may.
The night was short, and fast by the day
That needes cast he must²⁸ himself to hide.
And to a grove fast there beside
With dreadful foot then stalked Palamon.
For shortly this was his opinion,
That in the grove he would him hide all day,
And in the night then would he take his way

⁹ Lived in lowly fashion.

¹⁰ His secret, his private history.

¹¹ Fortune.

¹² Nearest; German, "näheste."

¹³ Order, direct.

¹⁴ Nonce, occasion, purpose.

¹⁵ Elevate him in rank.

¹⁶ Prudently, discreetly.

¹⁷ Led.

¹⁸ War.

¹⁹ Dear.

²⁰ Little.

²¹ Pined, wasted away.

²² Whom love so distresses or afflicts.

²³ Mad.

²⁴ In truth, I am not the man to do it.

²⁵ Settled, decreed.

²⁶ Hippocras wine made with spices.

²⁷ Narcotics and opiates, or opium.

²⁸ Close at hand was the day, during which he must cast about, or contrive, to conceal himself.

To Thebes-ward, his friendes for to pray
On Theseus to help him to warry.¹
And shortly either he would lose his life,
Or winnen Emily unto his wife.
This is th' effect, and his intention plain.

Now will I turn to Arcite again,
That little wist how night was his care,
Till that Fortune had brought him in the snare.
The busy lark, the messenger of day,
Saluteth in her song the morning gray;
And fiery Phoebus riseth up so bright,
That all the orient laugheth at the sight,
And with his streames² drieth in the groves³
The silver droppes, hanging on the leaves;
And Arcite, that is in the court royál
With Theseus, his squier principal,
Is ris'n, and looketh on the merry day.
And for to do his observance to May,
Remembering the point⁴ of his desire,
He on his courser, starting as the fire,
Is ridden to the fieldes him to play,
Out of the court, were it a mile or tway.
And to the grove, of which I have you told,
By aventure his way began to hold,
To maké him a garland of the groves.⁵
Were it of woodbine, or of hawthorn leaves,
And loud he sang against the sun so sheen.⁶
"O May, with all thy flowers and thy green,
Right welcome be thou, fairé freshé May,
I hope that I some green here gotten may."
And from his courser, with a lusty heart,
Into the grove full hastily he start,
And in a path he roamed up and down,
There as by aventure this Palamon
Was in a bush, that no man might him see,
For sore afearéd of his death was he.
Nothing he knew he that it was Arcite;
God wot he would have trowed it full lite.⁶
But sooth is said, gone since full many years,⁷
The field hath eyen, and the wood hath ears.
It is full fair a man to bear him even.⁸
For all day meeten men at unset steven.⁹
Full little wot Arcite of his felláw,
That was so nigh to hearken of his saw,¹⁰
For in the bush he sitteth now full still.
When that Arcite had roamed all his fill,
And sungeu all the roundel¹¹ lustily,
Into a study he fell suddenly,
As do those lovers in their quainté gears,¹²
Now in the crop, and now down in the breres,¹³
Now up, now down, as bucket in a well.
Right as the Friday, soothly for to tell,
Now shineth it, and now it raineth fast,
Right so can geary¹⁴ Venus overcast
The heartes of her folk, right as her day

Is gearful,¹⁴ right so changeth she array.
Seldom is Friday all the weeké like.
When Arcite had y-sung, he gan to sike,¹⁵
And sat him down withouten any more:
"Alas!" quoth he, "the day that I was bore!
How longé, Juno, through thy cruelty
Wilt thou warrayen¹⁶ Thebes the city?
Alas! y-brought is to confusion
The blood royál of Cadm' and Amphion:
Of Cadmus, which that was the firsté man,
That Thebes built, or first the town began,
And of the city first was crowned king.
Of his lineage am I, and his offspring
By very line, as of the stock royál;
And now I am so caittif and so thrall,¹⁷
That he that is my mortal enemy,
I serve him as his squier poorly.
And yet doth Juno me well moré shame,
For I dare not beknow¹⁸ mine owen name,
But there as I was wont to hight Arcite,
Now hight I Philostrate, not worth a mite.
Alas! thou fell Mars, and alas! Juno,
Thus hath your ire our lineage all fordo'.¹⁹
Save only me, and wretched Palamon,
That Theseus martyreth in prison.
And over all this, to slay me utterly,
Love hath his fiery dart so brenningly²⁰
Y-sticked through my true careful heart,
That shapen was my death erst than my shert.²¹
Ye slay me with your eyen, Emily;
Ye be the causé wherefore that I die.
Of all the remnant of mine other care
Ne set I not the mountance of a tare,²²
So that I could do aught to your plesance."

And with that word he fell down in a trance
A longé time; and afterward upstart
This Palamon, that thought thorough his heart
He felt a cold sword suddenly to glide:
For ire he quoke,²³ no longer would he hide.
And when that he had heard Arcite's tale,
As he were wood,²⁴ with facé dead and pale,
He start him up out of the bushes thick,
And said: "False Arcite, false traitor wick",²⁵
Now art thou hent,²⁶ that lov'st my lady so,
For whom that I have all this pain and woe,
And art my blood, and to my counsel sworn,
As I full oft have told thee herebeforen,
And hast bejaped²⁷ here Duke Theseus,
And falsely changed hast thy namé thus;
I will be dead, or ellés thou shalt die.
Thou shalt not love my lady Emily,
But I will love her only and no mo';
For I am Palamon thy mortal foe.
And though I have no weapon in this place,
But out of prison am astart²⁸ by grace,

¹ To make war; French, "guerroyer"; to molest; hence, perhaps, "to worry."

² Beams, rays.

³ Groves.

⁴ Object.

⁵ Shining, bright.

⁶ Full little believed it.

⁷ It is an old and true saying.

⁸ To be always of the same demeanour; on his guard.

⁹ Every day men meet at unexpected time. To

"set a steven," is to fix a time, make an appointment.

¹⁰ Saying, speech.

¹¹ Roundelay; song coming round again to the words

with which it opened.

¹² Odd fashions.

¹³ Now in the tree-top, now in the brars. "Crop and root," top and bottom, is used to express the perfection or totality of anything.

¹⁴ Changeful, full of "gears" or humours, inconsistent.

¹⁵ Sigh.

¹⁶ Torment.

¹⁷ So wretched and enslaved.

¹⁸ Avow, acknowledge; German, "bekennen."

¹⁹ Undone, ruined.

²⁰ Burningly.

²¹ My death was decreed before my shirt was shaped—that is, before any clothes were made for me, before my birth.

²² The value of a tare or a straw.

²³ Or "quook," from "quake," as "shook" from "shake."

²⁴ Mad.

²⁵ Wicked.

²⁶ Caught.

²⁷ Deceived, imposed upon.

²⁸ Escaped.

I dread¹ not that either thou shalt die,
Or else thou shalt not loven Emily.
Choose which thou wilt, for thou shalt not
astart.²

This Arcite then, with full dispiteous³ heart,
When he him knew, and had his tale heard,
As fierce as lion pulled out a sword,
And said thus; "By God that sitt' th above,
N'ere it⁴ that thou art sick, and wood for love,
And eke that thou no weap'n hast in this place,
Thou should'st never out of this grove pace,
That thou ne shouldest dien of mine hand.
For I defy the surety and the band,
Which that thou sayest I have made to thee.
What? very fool, think well that love is free;
And I will love her maugre⁵ all thy might.
But, for thou art a worthy gentle knight,
And wiltest to darraine her by bataille,⁶
Have here my troth, to-morrow I will not fail,
Without weesting⁷ of any other wight,
That here I will be founden as a knight,
And bringe harness⁸ right enough for thee;
And choose the best, and leave the worst for me.
And meat and drink this night will I bring
Enough for thee, and clothes for thy bedding.
And if so be that thou my lady win,
And slay me in this wood that I am in,
Thou may'st well have thy lady as for me."
This Palamon answer'd, "I grant it thee."
And thus they be departed till the morrow,
When each of them hath laid his faith to borrow.⁹

O Cupid, out of all charity!
O Regne¹⁰ that wilt no fellow have with thee!
Full sooth is said, that love nor lordship
Will not, his thanks,¹¹ have any fellowship.
Well finden that Arcite and Palamon.
Arcite is ridd anon unto the town,
And on the morrow, ere it were daylight,
Full privily two harness hath he dight,¹²
Both sufficient and meete to darraine¹³
The battle in the field betwixt them twain.
And on his horse, alone as he was born,
He carrieth all this harness him befor;
And in the grove, at time and place y-set,
This Arcite and this Palamon be met.
Then changè gan the colour of their face;
Right as the hunter in the regne¹⁴ of Thrace
That standeth at a gappè¹⁵ with a spear
When hunted is the lion or the bear,
And heareth him come rushing in the greves,¹⁶
And breaking both the boughs and the leaves,
Thinketh, "Here comes my mortal enemy,
Without fail, he must be dead or I;
For either I must slay him at the gap;
Or he must slay me, if that me mishap:"
So fared they, in changing of their hue
As far as either of them other knew.¹⁶

There was no good day, and no saluting,
But straight, without wordes rehearsing,
Evereach of them help to arm the other,
As friendly, as he were his owen brother.
And after that, with sharpe speares strong
They foined¹⁷ each at other wonder long.
Thou mightest weene,¹⁸ that this Palamon
In his fighting were as a wood¹⁹ lion,
And as a cruel tiger was Arcite:
As wilde boars gan they together smite,
That froth as white as foam, for ire wood.²⁰
Up to the ancle fought they in their blood.
And in this wise I let them fighting dwell,
And forth I will of Theseus you tell.

The Destiny, minister general,
That executeth in the world o'er all
The purveyance,²¹ that God hath seen befor;
So strong it is, that though the world had sworn
The contrary of a thing by yea or nay,
Yet some time it shall fallen on a day
That falleth not eft²² in a thousand year.
For certainly our appetites here,
Be it of war, or peace, or hate, or love,
All is this ruled by the sight²³ above.
This mean I now by mighty Theseus,
That for to hunt is so desirous—
And namely²⁴ the great hart in May—
That in his bed there daweth him no day
That he n'is clad, and ready for to ride
With hunt and horn, and houndis him beside.
For in his hunting hath he such delight,
That it is all his joy and appetite
To be himself the great hart's bane;²⁵
For after Mars he serveth now Diane.
Clear was the day, as I have told ere this,
And Theseus, with all joy and bliss,
With his Hippolyta, the faire queen,
And Emily, y-clothed all in green,
On hunting be they ridden royally.
And to the grove, that stood there fast by,
In which there was an hart, as men him told,
Duke Theseus the straight way doth hold,
And to the laund²⁶ he rideth him full right,
There was the hart y-wont to have his fight,
And over a brook, and so forth on his way.
This Duke will have a course at him or tway
With houndes, such as him lust²⁷ to command.
And when this Duke was comè to the laund,
Under the sun he looked, and anon
He was ware of Arcite and Palamon,
That fought breme,²⁸ as it were bullis two.
The bright swordes went to and fro
So hideously, that with the least stroke
It seemed that it would fell an oak,
But what they werè, nothing yet he wote.
This Duke his courser with his spurres smote,
And at a start²⁹ he was betwixt them two,

1 Doubt. 2 Wrathful.
3 Were it not. 4 Despite.
5 Wilt challenge, reclaim, her by combat.
6 Knowledge. 7 Armour, arms.
8 Had pledged his faith.
9 Queen; French, "Reine." Venus is meant. The common reading, however, is "regne," reign or power.
10 Thanks to him; with his goodwill. 11 Contest.
12 Prepared two suits of armour. 13 Gap, opening.
14 Realm, kingdom. 15 Groves.

16 When they recognised each other afar off.
17 Thrust. 18 Think. 19 Mad.
20 For anger mad.
21 Providence, foreordination.
22 Again. 23 Eye; intelligence, power.
24 Especially. 25 Torment, destruction.
26 Plain. Compare modern English, "lawn," and French, "Landes"—flat, bare marshy tracts in the south of France.
27 Pleased. 28 Fiercely.
29 In a moment, on a sudden.

And pulled out a sword and cried, "Ho!
No more, on pain of losing of your head.
By mighty Mars, he shall anon be dead
That smiteth any stroke, that I may see!
But tell to me what mister¹ men ye be,
That be so hardy for to fight here
Without² judge or other officer,
As though it were in listis³ royally."

This Palamon answered hastily,
And said: "Sir, what needeth wordis mo'⁴?
We have the death deserved both two,
Two woful wretches be we, and captives,
That be accumbered⁵ of our own lives,
And as thou art a rightful lord and judge,
So give us neither mercy nor refuge.
And slay me first, for saintis charity,
But slay my fellow eke as well as me.
Or slay him first; for, though thou know it lite,⁶
This is thy mortal foe, this is Arcite,
That from thy land is baniaht on his head,
For which he hath deserved to be dead.
For this is he that came unto thy gate
And said, that he hightis Philostrate.
Thus hath he japed⁷ thee full many a year,
And thou hast made of him thy chief esquier;
And this is he, that loveth Emily.
For since the day is come that I shall die
I makis plainly⁸ my confessioun,
That I am thilke⁹ woful Palamon,
That hath thy prison broken wickedly.
I am thy mortal foe, and it am I
That so hot loveth Emily the bright,
That I would die here present in her sight.
Therefore I askis death and my jewise.⁹
But slay my fellow eke in the same wise,
For both we have deserved to be slain."

This worthy Duke answer'd anon again,
And said, "This is a short conclusioun.
Your own mouth, by your own confessioun
Hath damned you, and I will it record;
It needeth not to pain you with the cord;
Ye shall be dead, by mighty Mars the Red."⁹

The queen anon for very womanhead
Began to weep, and so did Emily,
And all the ladies in the company.
Great pity was it, as it thought them all,
That ever such a chance should befall,
For gentle men they were, of great estate,
And nothing but for love was this debate;
They saw their bloody woundis wide and sore,
And cried all at once, both less and more,
"Have mercy, Lord, upon us women all."
And on their bare knees adown they fall,
And would have kiss'd his feet there as he
stood,

Till at the last assailed was his mood¹⁰
(For pity runneth soon in gentle heart);
And though at first for ire he quoke and start,
He hath consider'd shortly in a clause
The trespass of them both, and eke the cause:
And although that his ire their guilt accused,
Yet in his reason he them both excused;
As thus; he thoughtis well that every man
Will help himself in love if that he can,
And eke deliver himself out of prison.
And eke his heartis had compassioun
Of women, for they wepten ever-in-one;¹¹
And in his gentle heart he thoughtis anon,
And soft unto himself he said: "Fie
Upon a lord that will have no mercy,
But be a lion both in word and deed,
To them that be in repentence and dread,
As well as to a proud dispiteous¹² man
That will maintainis what he first began.
That lord hath litle of discretioun,
That in such case can no division:¹³
But weigheth pride and humbles after one."¹⁴
And shortly, when his ire is thus agone,
He gan to look on them with eyen light,¹⁵
And spake these same wordis all on height.¹⁶

"The god of love, ah! *benedicite*,¹⁷
How mighty and how great a lord is he!
Against his might there gainis¹⁸ none obstacles,
He may be call'd a god for his miracles.
For he can maken at his owen guise
Of every heart, as that him list devise.
Lo here this Arcite, and this Palamon,
That quietly were out of my prison,
And might have lived in Thebes royally,
And weet¹⁹ I am their mortal enemy,
And that their death li'th in my might also,
And yet hath love, maugre their eyen two,²⁰
Y-brought them hither bothis for to die.
Now look ye, is not this an high folly?
Who may not be a fool, if but he love?
Behold, for Goddis sake that sits above,
See how they bleed! be they not well array'd?
Thus hath their lord, the god of love, them paid
Their wages and their fees for their service;
And yet they weenis for to be full wise,
That serveth love, for ought that may befall.
But this is yet the bestis game²¹ of all,
That she, for whom they have this jealousy,
Can them therefor as muchal thank as me.
She wot no more of all this hotis fare,²²
By God, than wot a cuckoo or an hare.
But all must be assayed hot or cold;
A man must be a fool, or young or old;
I wot it by myself full yore agone:²³
For in my time a servant was I one.

¹ Manner, kind; German, "Muster," sample, model.

² In the lists, prepared for such single combats between champion and accuser, &c.

³ Wearied, burdened.

⁴ Little.

⁵ Deceived.

⁶ Fully, unreservedly.

⁷ Contracted from "the like," the same; that.

⁸ Doom, judgment; from the Latin, "judicium."

⁹ Referring to the ruddy colour of the planet, to which was doubtless due the transference to it of the name of the God of War. In his "Republic," enumerating the seven planets, Cicero speaks of the proportions and beneficent light of Jupiter: "Tum (fulgor) rutilius horribilisque teris, quem Martium dicitis"—

"Then the red glow, horrible to the nations, which you say to be that of Mars." Boccaccio opens the "Thesida" by an invocation to "rubicondo Marte."

¹⁰ His anger was appeased.

¹¹ Continually; perhaps another reading, "every one," is the better.

¹² Unpitiful, disdainful.

¹³ Can make no distinction.

¹⁴ Alike.

¹⁵ Gentle, lenient.

¹⁶ Aloud; he had just been speaking to himself.

¹⁷ Bless ye him. ¹⁸ Avail, conquer. ¹⁹ Know.

²⁰ "In spite of their eyes."

²¹ The best joke of all—the best of the joke.

²² Behaviour.

²³ Long ago; years ago.

And therefore since I know of lovè's pain,
 And wot how sore it can a man distraín,¹
 As he that oft hath been caught in his las,²
 I you forgivè wholly this trespass,
 At request of the queen that kneeleth here,
 And eke of Emily, my sister dear.
 And ye shall both anon unto me swear,
 That never more ye shall my country drey,³
 Nor makè war upon me night nor day,
 But be my friends in allè that ye may.
 I you forgive this trespass every deal."⁴
 And they him sware his asking⁵ fair and well,
 And him of lordship and of mercy pray'd,
 And he them granted grace, and thus he said:

"To speak of royal lineage and richéms,
 Though that she were a queen or a princess,
 Each of you both is worthy doubtless
 To weddè when time is; but natheless
 I speak as for my sister Emily,
 For whom ye have this strife and jealousy,
 Ye wot yourselves, she may not wed the two
 At once, although ye fight for evermo':
 But one of you, all be him loth or lief,⁶
 He must go pipe into an ivy leaf;⁷
 This is to say, she may not have you both,
 All be ye never so jealous, nor so wroth.
 And therefore I you put in this degree,
 That each of you shall have his destiny
 As him is shape;⁸ and hearken in what wise;
 Lo hear your end of that I shall devise.
 My will is this, for plain conclusiún
 Withouten any replicatiún,⁹
 If that you liketh, take it for the best,
 That evereach of you shall go where him lest,¹⁰
 Freely withoutè ransom or dangér;
 And this day fifty weekès, farre ne nerre,¹¹
 Evereach of you shall bring an hundred knights,
 Armed for listès up at allè rights
 All ready to darraine¹² her by bataille,
 And this behete¹³ I you withoutè fail
 Upon my troth, and as I am a knight,
 That whether of you bothè that hath might,
 That is to say, that whether he or thou
 May with his hundred, as I spake of now,
 Slay his contráry, or out of listès drive,
 Him shall I given Emily to wive,
 To whom that fortune gives so fair a grace.
 The listès shall I make here in this place.
 And God so wisly on my souls rue,¹⁴
 As I shall even judgè be and true.
 Ye shall none other endè with me maken
 Than one of you shallè be dead or taken.
 And if you thinketh this is well y-said,
 Say your advice,¹⁵ and hold yourselves apaid.¹⁶
 This is your end, and your conclusiún."
 Who looketh lightly now but Palamon?
 Who springeth up for joyè but Arcite?

Who could it tell, or who could it indite,
 The joyè that is maken in the place
 When Theseus hath done so fair a grace?
 But down on knees went every manner¹⁷ wight,
 And thanked him with all their heartès' might,
 And namèly¹⁸ these Thebans offè sithe.¹⁹
 And thus with good hope and with heartè blithe
 They take their leave, and homeward gan they
 ride

To Thebes-ward, with his old wallès wide.

I trow men wouldè deem it negligence,
 If I forgot to tellè the dispence²⁰
 Of Theseus, that went so busily
 To maken up the listès royally,
 That such a noble theatre as it was,
 I dare well say, in all this world there n'as.²¹
 The circuit a milè was about,
 Walled of stone, and ditched all without.
 Round was the shape, in manner of compás,
 Full of degrees,²² the height of sixty pas,²³
 That when a man was set on one degree
 He lettèd²⁴ not his fellow for to see.
 Eastward there stood a gate of marble white,
 Westward right such another opposite.
 And, shortly to concludè, such a place
 Was never on earth made in so little space,
 For in the land there was no craftès-man,
 That geometry or arismetrikè can,²⁵
 Nor pourtrayor,²⁶ nor carver of imáges,
 That Theseus ne gave him meat and wages
 The theatre to make and to devise.
 And for to do his rite and sacrifice
 He eastward hath upon the gate above,
 In worship of Venus, goddess of love,
 Done²⁷ make an altar and an oratory;
 And westward, in the mind and in memory
 Of Mars, he makèd hath right such another,
 That costè largèly of gold a fother.²⁸
 And northward, in a turret on the wall,
 Of alabaster white and red coral
 An oratory richè for to see,
 In worship of Diane of chastity,
 Hath Theseus done²⁹ work in noble wise.
 But yet had I forgotten to devise³⁰
 The noble carving, and the portraitures,
 The shape, the countenance of the figures
 That weren in these oratories three.

First in the temple of Venus may'st thou see
 Wrought on the wall, full piteous to behold,
 The broken sleepès, and the sikès³¹ cold,
 The sacred tearès, and the waimentings,³²
 The fiery strokès of the desirings,
 That Lovè's servants in this life endure;
 The oathès, that their covenants assure.
 Pleasance and Hope, Desire, Foolhardiness,
 Beauty and Youth, and Bawdry and Richéss,
 Charms and Sor'ry, Leasings³³ and Flattery,

1 Distress, torment.

2 Lace, leash, noose; snare; from Latin, "laqueus."

3 Injures. 4 Completely. 5 What he asked.

6 Will be, will be. 7 "He must go whistle."

8 As is decreed, prepared, for him.

9 Reply. 10 Where he pleases.

11 Neither farther nor nearer.

12 Contend for. 13 Promise.

14 May God as surely have mercy on my soul.

15 Opinion. 16 Satisfied. 17 Kind of. 18 Especially.

19 Offentimes; the Thebans are the rival lovers.

20 Expenditure.

21 Was not.

22 Steps, benches, as in the ancient amphitheatre.

23 Either the building was sixty paces high; or, more probably, there were sixty of the steps or benches.

24 Hindered.

25 Arithmetic.

26 Painter of figures or portraits.

27 Caused. 28 A great amount, heap.

29 Describe.

30 Signs.

31 Lamentings.

32 Falsehoods.

Dispençé, Business, and Jealousy,
That wore of yellow goldes¹ a garland,
And had a cuckoo sitting on her hand,
Feasts, instruments, and carolés and dances,
Lust and array, and all the circumstāces
Of Love, which I reckon'd and reckon shall
In order, weré painted on the wall,
And more than I can make of mentiō.
For soothly all the mount of Citheron,²
Where Venus hath her principal dwelling,
Was showed on the wall in pourtraying,
With all the garden, and the lustiness.³
Nor was forgot the porter Idleness,
Nor Narcissus the fair of yore agone,⁴
Nor yet the folly of King Solomon,
Nor yet the great strength of Hercules,
Th' enchantments of Medea and Circe,
Nor of Turnus the hardy fierce courage,
The riché Cressus cañtiff in servage.⁵
Thus may ye see, that wisdom nor richéss,
Beauty, nor sleight, nor strength, nor hardiness,
Ne may with Venus holdé champartie,⁶
For as her listé the world may she gie.⁷
Lo, all these folk so caught were in her las⁸
Till they for woe full often said, Alas!
Sufficé these ensamples one or two,
Although I could reckon a thousand mo'.

The statue of Venus, glorious to see
Was naked floating in the largé sea,
And from the navel down all cover'd was
With wavés green, and bright as any glass.
A citole⁹ in her right hand haddé she,
And on her head, full seemly for to see,
A rosé garland fresh, and well smelling,
Above her head her doves flickering.
Before her stood her soné Cupido,
Upon his shoulders wingé had he two;
And blind he was, as it is often seen;
A bow he bare, and arrows bright and keen.

Why should I not as well eke tell you all
The portraiture, that was upon the wall
Within the temple of mighty Mars the Red?
All painted was the wall in length and brede¹⁰
Like to the estres¹¹ of the grisly place
That hight the great Temple of Mars in Thrace,
In thilké¹² cold and frosty región,
There as Mars hath his sovereign mansion.
First on the wall was painted a forêt,

In which there dwelled neither man nor beast,
With knotty gnarry¹³ barren trees old
Of stubbés sharp and hideous to behold;
In which there ran a rumble and a sough,¹⁴
As though a storm should bursten every bough:
And downward from an hill under a bent,¹⁵
There stood the temple of Mars Armipotent,
Wrought all of burnish'd steel, of which th' entry
Was long and strait, and ghastly for to see.
And thereout came a rage and such a vise,¹⁶
That it made all the gattés for to rise.
The northern light in at the dooré shone,
For window on the wallé was there none
Through which men mighten any light discern.
The doors were all of adamant etern,
Y-clenched overthwart and endélong¹⁷
With iron tough, and, for to make it strong,
Every pillar the temple to sustain
Was tunnè-great,¹⁸ of iron bright and sheen.
There saw I first the dark imagining
Of felony, and all the compassing;
The cruel ire, as red as any glede,¹⁹
The pickspurse,²⁰ and eke the palé dread;
The smiler with the knife under the cloak,
The shepen²¹ burning with the blacké smoke;
The treason of the murd'ring in the bed,
The open war, with woundés all be-bled;
Conteke²² with bloody knife, and sharp menace.
All full of chirking²³ was that sorry place.
The slayer of himself eke saw I there,
His hearté-blood had bathed all his hair:
The nail y-driven in the shode²⁴ at night,
The coldé death, with mouth gaping upright.
Amiddé of the temple sat Mischance,
With discomfort and sorry countenance;
Eke saw I Woodness²⁵ laughing in his rage,
Armed Complaint, Outhees,²⁶ and fierce Outrage;
The carrain²⁷ in the bush, with throat y-corve,²⁸
A thousand slain, and not of qualm y-storve;²⁹
The tyrant, with the prey by force y-reft;
The town destroy'd, that there was nothing left.
Yet saw I brent the shippés hoppèsteres,³⁰
The hunter strangled with the wildé bears:
The sow fretting³¹ the child right in the cradle;
The cook scalded, for all his longé ladle.
Nor was forgot, by th' infortune of Mart³²
The carter overriden with his cart;
Under the wheel full low he lay adown.

¹ The flower turnsol, or girasol, which turns with and seems to watch the sun, as a jealous lover his mistress.

² The isle of Venus, Cýthéra, in the Egean Sea; now called Cerigo: not, as Chaucer's form of the word might imply, Mount Citheron, in the south-west of Bœotia, which was appropriated to other deities than Venus—to Jupiter, to Bacchus, and the Muses.

³ Pleasantness. ⁴ Olden time.

⁵ Abased into slavery. It need not be said that Chaucer pays slight heed to chronology in this passage, where the deeds of Turnus, the glory of King Solomon, and the fate of Cressus are made memories of the far past in the time of fabulous Theseus, the Minotaur-slayer.

⁶ Divided power or possession: an old law-term, signifying the maintenance of a person in a suit on the condition of receiving part of the property in dispute. If recovered.

⁷ Or "guy": guide, rule.

⁸ A kind of dulcimer.

⁹ Interior, chambers.

¹⁰ Groaning noise.

¹¹ Snare.

¹² Breadth.

¹³ That. ¹⁴ Gnarled.

¹⁵ Slope.

¹⁶ Such a furious voice.

¹⁷ Crossways and lengthways.

¹⁸ Thick as a tun.

¹⁹ Live coal.

²⁰ The plunderers that followed armies, and gave to war a horror all their own.

²¹ Stable; Anglo-Saxon, "scrypen;" the word "sheppon" still survives in provincial parlance.

²² Contention, discord. ²³ Creaking, jarring noise.

²⁴ Hair of the head; the line, perhaps, refers to the deed of Jael. ²⁵ Madman. ²⁶ Outcry.

²⁷ Carrion, corpse. ²⁸ Slashed, cut.

²⁹ Not dead of sickness.

³⁰ The meaning is dubious. We may understand "the dancing ships," the ships that "hop" on the waves; "steres" being taken as the feminine adjectival termination: or we may, perhaps, read, with one of the manuscripts, "the ships up the steres"—that is, even as they are being steered, or on the open sea—a more picturesque notion.

³¹ Devouring; the Germans use "fressen" to describe eating by animals, "essen" by men.

³² Through the misfortune of war.

There were also of Mars' division,
The armourer, the bowyer,¹ and the smith,
That forgoth sharpe swordes on his stith.²
And all above depainted in a tower
Saw I Conquest, sitting in great honour,
With thilke³ sharpe sword over his head
Hanging by a subtle y-twined thread.
Painted the slaughter was of Julius,⁴
Of cruel Nero, and Antonius:
Although at that time they were yet unborn,
Yet was their death depainted there befor,
By menacing of Mars, right by figure,
So was it showed in that portraiture,
As is depainted in the stars above,
Who shall be slain, or ellës dead for love.
Sufficeth one ensample in stories old,
I may not reckon them all, though I wold.

The statue of Mars upon a cart⁵ stood
Armed, and looked grim as he were wood,⁶
And over his head there shonë two figures
Of starres, that be cleped in scriptures,
That one Puella, that other Rubeus.⁷
This god of armës was arrayed thus:
A wolf there stood before him at his feet
With eyen red, and of a man he eat:
With subtle pencil painted was this story,
In redouting⁸ of Mars and of his glory.

Now to the temple of Dian the chaste
As shortly as I can I will me haste,
To tellë you all the description.
Depainted be the wallës up and down
Of hunting and of shamefast chastity.
There saw I how woful Calistope,⁹
When that Dian aggrieved was with her,
Was turned from a woman till a bear,
And after was she made the lodëstar:¹⁰
Thus was it painted, I can say no far;¹¹
Her son is eke a star as men may see.
There saw I Danë¹² turn'd into a tree,
I meanë not the goddess Dianë,
But Peneus' daughter, which that hight Danë.
There saw I Actëon an hart y-maked,¹³
For vengeance that he saw Dian all naked:
I saw how that his boundës have him caught,
And freten¹⁴ him, for that they knew him not.
Yet painted was, a little farthermore,
How Atalanta hunted the wild boar,
And Meleager, and many other mo',
For which Diana wrought them care and woe.
There saw I many another wondrous story,

1 Maker of bows. 2 Stithy, anvil. 3 That.

4 Julius Cæsar. 5 Cartiot. 6 Mad.

7 Puella and Rubeus were two figures in geomancy, representing two constellations—the one signifying Mars retrograde, the other Mars direct.

8 In reverence, fear.

9 Or Callisto: daughter of Lycaon, seduced by Jupiter, turned into a bear by Diana, and placed afterwards, with her son, as the Great Bear among the stars.

10 Polestar. 11 Farther; for "farre" or "ferre."

12 Daphne, daughter of the river-god Peneus, in Thes-saly; she was beloved by Apollo, but to avoid his pursuit, she was, at her own prayer, changed into a laurel-tree.

13 Made. 14 Devour. 15 Seated. 16 Quiver.

17 As the goddess of Light, or the goddess who brings to light, Diana—as well as Juno—was invoked by women in child-birth: so Horace, Odes iii. 22, says:—

"Montium custos nemorumque, Virgo,
Quæ laborantes utero puellas
Ter vocatë audis adimisque leto, Diva triformis."

The which me list not drawn to memöry.
This goddess on an hart full high was set,¹⁵
With smallë houndës all about her feet,
And underneath her feet she had a moon,
Waxing it was, and shouldë wanë soon.
In gaudy green her statue clothed was,
With bow in hand, and arrows in a case.¹⁶
Her eyen castë she full low adown,
Where Pluto hath his darkë regioun.
A woman travailing was her befor,
But, for her child so longë was unborn,
Full piteously Lucina¹⁷ gan she call,
And said; "Help, for thou may'st best of
all."

Well could he paintë lifelike that it wrought;
With many a florin he the hues had bought.
Now be these listës made, and Theseus,
That at his greatë cost arrayed thus
The temples, and the theatre every deal,¹⁸
When it was done, him liked wonder well.
But stint¹⁹ I will of Theseus a lite,²⁰
And speak of Palamon and of Arcite.

The day approacheth of their returning,
That evereach an hundred knights should
bring,

The battle to darraigne²¹ as I you told;
And to Athens, their covenant to hold,
Hath ev'reach of them brought an hundred
knights,

Well armed for the war at allë rights.
And sicklerly²² there trowed²³ many a man,
That never, sithen²⁴ that the world began,
For to speaken of knighthood of their hand,
As far as God hath maked sea and land,
Was, of so few, so noble a company.²⁵
For every wight that loved chivalry,
And would, his thankës,²⁶ have a passant²⁷ name,
Had prayed, that he might be of that game,
And well was him, that thereto chosen was.
For if there fall to-morrow such a case,
Ye knowë well, that every lusty knight,
That loveth par amour, and hath his might,
Were it in Engleland, or ellëswhere,
They would, their thankës, willen to be there,
T' fight for a lady; *benedicite*,
It were a lusty²⁸ sightë for to see.
And right so fared they with Palamon;
With him there wentë knightës many one.
Some will be armed in an habergeon,
And in a breast-plate, and in a gipon;²⁹

15 In every part: "deal" corresponds to the German "Theil," a portion.

16 Cease speaking.

20 Little.

21 Set in array; contest.

22 Surely; German, "sicher;" Scotch, "sikkar," certain. When Robert Bruce had escaped from England to assume the Scottish crown, he stabbed Comyn before the altar at Dumfries; and, emerging from the church, was asked by his friend Kirkpatrick if he had slain the traitor. "I doubt it," said Bruce. "Doubt," cried Kirkpatrick. "I'll mak sikkar;" and he rushed into the church, and despatched Comyn with repeated thrusts of his dagger.

23 Believed.

24 Since.

25 Never since the world began was there assembled from every part of the earth, in proportion to the smallness of the number, such a brave and noble company of knights.

26 With his good-will; thanks to his own efforts.

27 Surpassing. 28 Pleasing. 29 Short doublet.

And some will have a pair of platte¹ large;
And some will have a Prusse² shield, or targe;
Some will be armed on their legges weal;³
Some have an axe, and some a mace of steel.
There is no newe guise,⁴ but it was old.
Armed they weren, as I have you told,
Evereach after his opinioun.

There may'st thou see coming with Palamon
Licurgus himself, the great king of Thrace:
Black was his beard, and manly was his face.
The ciroles of his eyen in his head
They glowed betwixte yellow and red,
And like a griffin looked he about,
With kemped⁵ hairis on his browis stout;
His limbs were great, his brawns were hard and

strong,
His shoulders broad, his armes round and long.
And as the guise⁶ was in his country,
Full high upon a car of gold stood he,
With four⁷ white bullis in the trace.
Instead of coat-armour on his harness,
With yellow nails, and bright as any gold,
He had a bear's skin, coal-black for old.⁸
His long hair was y-kempt behind his back,
As any raven's feather it shone for black.
A wreath of gold arm-great,⁹ of hughe weight,
Upon his head sate, full of stonis bright,
Of fine rubies and clear diamants.
About his car there went¹⁰ white alauns,¹¹
Twenty and more, as great as any steer,
To hunt the lion or the wilde bear,
And follow'd him, with muzzle fast y-bound,
Collars of gold, and torettes¹² filed round.
An hundred lordes had he in his rout,¹³
Armed full well, with heartis stern and stout.

With Arcite, in stories as men find,
The great Emetrius the king of Ind,
Upon a steede bay,¹⁴ trapped in steel,
Cover'd with cloth of gold dispre¹⁵ well,
Came riding like the god of armes, Mars.
His coat-armour was of a cloth of Tars,¹⁶
Couched¹⁷ with pearles white and round and

great.
His saddle was of burnish'd gold new beat;
A mantellet on his shoulders hanging
Bretful¹⁸ of rubies red, as fire sparkling.
His crisp¹⁹ hair like ringes was y-run,²⁰
And that was yellow, glittering as the sun.
His nose was high, his eyen bright citrine,²¹
His lips were round, his colour was sanguine,
A few fracknes in his face y-sprent,²²
Betwixt yellow and black somedael y-ment,²³
And as a lion he his looking cast.²⁴

¹ Back and front armour.

² Prussian.

³ Well-greaved; like Homer's *εὐκρημίδες Ἀχαιοί*.

⁴ Fashion.

⁵ Combed; the word survives in "unkempt."

⁶ Age.

⁷ As thick as a man's arm.

⁸ Greyhounds, mastiffs; from the Spanish word

"Alano," signifying a mastiff.

⁹ Rings.

¹⁰ Retinue, company.

¹¹ Bay horse.

¹² Diversified with flourishes or figures.

¹³ A kind of silk.

¹⁴ Trimmed.

¹⁵ Brimful, covered with.

¹⁶ His curled hair ran down into ringlets.

¹⁷ Pale yellow colour.

¹⁸ A few freckles sprinkled on his face.

¹⁹ Somewhat mixed; German, "mengen," to mix.

Of five and twenty year his age I cast.²⁵
His beard was well begunnen for to spring;
His voice was as a trumpet thundering.
Upon his head he wore of laurel green
A garland fresh and lusty to be seen;
Upon his hand he bare, for his delight,
An eagle tame, as any lily white.
An hundred lordes had he with him there,
All armed, save their heads, in all their gear,
Full richely in all manner things.
For trust ye well, that earles, dukes, and kings
Were gather'd in this noble company,
For love, and for increase of chivalry.
About this king there ran on every part
Full many a tame lion and leopard.
And in this wise these lordes all and some²⁶
Be on the Sunday to the city come
About prime,²⁷ and in the town alight.

This Theseus, this Duke, this worthy knight,
When he had brought them into his city,
And inned²⁸ them, ev'reach at his degree,
He feasteth them, and doth so great labour
To easen them,²⁹ and do them all honour,
That yet men weene³⁰ that no manne's wit
Of none estat³¹ could amenden³² it.
The minstrelay, the service at the feast,
The great³³ giftes to the most and leest,
The rich array of Theseus' palace,
Nor who sate first or last upon the dais,³⁴
What ladies fairest be, or best dancing,
Or which of them can carol best or sing,
Or who most feelingly speaketh of love;
What hawk³⁵es sitten on the perch above,
What hound³⁶es ligen³⁷ on the floor adown,
Of all this now make I no mentioun;
But of th' effect; that thinketh me the best;
Now comes the point, and hearken if you last.³⁸

The Sunday night, ere day began to spring,
When Palamon the lark³⁹ heard sing,
Although it were not day by hours two,
Yet sang the lark, and Palamon right tho⁴⁰
With holy heart, and with an high courage,
Arose, to wenden⁴¹ on his pilgrimage
Unto the blisful Cithera benign,
I mean⁴² Venus, honourable and digne.⁴³
And in her hour⁴⁴ he walketh forth a pace
Unto the listis, where her temple was,
And down he kneeleth, and with humble chee⁴⁵
And heart⁴⁶ sore, he said as ye shall hear.

"Fairest of fair, O lady mine Venus,
Daughter to Jove, and spouse of Vulcanus,
Thou gladder of the mount of Citheron!⁴⁷
For thilk⁴⁸ love thou haddest to Adon⁴⁹

²⁵ Cast about his eyes.

²⁶ Reckon; as we now speak of "casting a sum."

²⁷ All and sundry.

²⁸ The time of early prayers, between six and nine in the morning.

²⁹ Lodged; whence "inn."

³⁰ Give them pleasure, make them comfortable.

³¹ Think. ³² Improve. ³³ See note 18, page 21.

³⁴ Lie. ³⁵ Please. ³⁶ Then. ³⁷ Go. ³⁸ Worthy.

³⁹ In the hour of the day which, under the astrological system that apportioned the twenty-four among the seven ruling planets, was under the influence of Venus.

⁴⁰ Demeanour. ⁴¹ See note 2, page 36. ⁴² That.

⁴³ Adonis, a beautiful youth beloved of Venus, whose death by the tusk of a boar she deeply mourned.

Have pity on my bitter tearst' smart,
 And take mine humble prayer to thine heart.
 Alas! I have no language to tell
 Th' effect, nor the torment of mine hall;
 Mine heart may mine harms not betray;
 I am so confused, that I cannot say.
 But mercy, lady bright, that knowest well
 My thought, and seest what harm that I feel.
 Consider all this, and rue upon¹ my sore,
 As wisly² as I shall for evermore
 Enforce my might, thy true servant to be,
 And hold's war away with chastity:
 That make I mine avow,³ so ye me help.
 I keep's not of arm's for to yelp,⁴
 Nor ask I not to-morrow to have victory,
 Nor renown in this case, nor vain's glory
 Of prize of arm's,⁵ blowing up and down,
 But I would have fully possessioun
 Of Emily, and die in her service;
 Find thou the manner how, and in what wise.
 I reck's not but⁶ it may better be
 To have vict'ry of them, or they of me,
 So that I have my lady in mine arms.
 For though so be that Mars is god of arms,
 Your virtue is so great in heaven above,
 That, if you list, I shall well have my love.
 Thy temple will I worship evermo',
 And on thine altar, where I ride or go,
 I will do sacrifice, and fir's bete.⁷
 And if ye will not so, my lady sweet,
 Then pray I you, to-morrow with a spear
 That Arcite me through the heart's bear.
 Then reck I not, when I have lost my life,
 Though that Arcite win her to his wife.
 This is th' effect and end of my pray're,—
 Give me my love, thou blisful lady dear."
 When th' orison was done of Palamon,
 His sacrifice he did, and that anon,
 Full piteously, with all's circumstances,
 All tell I not as now⁸ his observances.
 But at the last the statue of Venus shook,
 And made a sign, whereby that he took⁹
 That his pray'r accepted was that day.
 For though the sign shewed a delay,¹⁰
 Yet wist he well that granted was his boon;
 And with glad heart he went him home full soon.

The third hour unequal¹¹ that Palamon
 Began to Venus' temple for to gon,
 Up rose the sun, and up rose Emily,
 And to the temple of Dian gan hie.
 Her maidens, that she thither with her lad,¹²
 Full readily with them the fire they had,

Th' incense, the cloth's, and the remnant all
 That to the sacrifice belong's shall,
 The horn's full of mead, as was the guise;
 There lacked nought to do her sacrifice.
 Smoking¹³ the temple full of cloth's fair,
 This Emily with heart's debonnaire¹⁴
 Her body wash'd with water of a well.
 But how she did her rite I dare not tell;
 But¹⁵ it be any thing in general;
 And yet it were a game¹⁶ to hearken all;
 To him that meaneth well it were no charge;
 But it is good a man to be at large.¹⁷
 Her bright hair combed was, untressed all.
 A coronet of green oak cerrial¹⁸
 Upon her head was set full fair and meet.
 Two fir's on the altar gan she bete,
 And did her thing's, as men may behold
 In Stace¹⁹ of Thebes, and these book's old.
 When kindled was the fire, with piteous cheer
 Unto Dian she spake as ye may hear.

"O chaste goddess of the wood's green,
 To whom both heav'n and earth and sea is seen,
 Queen of the realm of Pluto dark and low,
 Goddess of maidens, that mine heart hast know
 Full many a year, and worst²⁰ what I desire,
 So keep me from the vengeance of thine ire,
 That Actæon abouted²¹ cruelly:
 Chaste goddess, well wottest thou that I
 Desire to be a maiden all my life,
 Nor never will I be no love nor wife.
 I am, thou wost,²² yet of thy company,
 A maid, and love hunting and ventry,²³
 And for to walken in the wood's wild,
 And not to be a wife, and be with child.
 Nought will I know the company of man.
 Now help me, lady, since ye may and can,
 For those three form's²⁴ that thou hast in thee.
 And Palamon, that hath such love to me,
 And eke Arcite, that loveth me so sore,
 This grace I pray's thee without's more,
 As send's love and peace betwix them two:
 And from me turn away their heart's so,
 That all their hot's love, and their desire,
 And all their busy torment, and their fire,
 Be quaint,²⁵ or turn'd into another place.
 And if so be thou wilt do me no grace,
 Or if my destiny be shapen so
 That I shall need's have one of them two,
 So send me him that most desireth me.
 Behold, goddess of clean's chastity,
 The bitter tears that on my cheek's fall.
 Since thou art maid, and keeper of us all,

¹ Take pity on.

² Certainly, truly; German, "gewiss."

³ Vow, promise.

⁴ Care not to boast of feats of arms.

⁵ Praise, esteem for valour.

⁶ Whether.

⁷ Make, kindle.

⁸ Although I tell not now.

⁹ Understood.

¹⁰ Was not immediately vouchsafed.

¹¹ In the third planetary hour; Palamon had gone forth in the hour of Venus, two hours before daybreak; the hour of Mercury intervened; the third hour was that of Luna, or Diana. "Unequal" refers to the astrological division of day and night; whatever their duration, into twelve parts, which of necessity varied in length with the season.

¹² Led.

¹³ Draping; hence the word "smook;" "smokless," in Chaucer, means naked.

¹⁴ Gentle.

¹⁵ Except.

¹⁶ Pleasure.

¹⁷ Do as he will.

¹⁸ Of the species of oak which Pliny, in his "Natural History," calls "cerrus."

¹⁹ Statius, the Roman poet, who embodied in the twelve books of his "Thebaid" the ancient legends connected with the war of the Seven against Thebes.

²⁰ Knowest.

²¹ Earned; suffered from.

²² Field sports.

²³ Diana was Luna in heaven, Diana on earth, and Hecate in hell; hence the direction of the eyes of her statue to "Pluto's dark region." Her statue was set up where three ways met, so that with a different face she looked down each of the three; from which she was called Trivia. See the quotation from Horace, note 17, page 87.

²⁴ Quenched.

My maidenhead thou keep and well conserve,
And, while I live, a maid I will thee serve."

The fires burn upon the altar clear,
While Emily was thus in her prayere :
But suddenly she saw a sight¹ quaint.
For right anon one of the fires quaint
And quick'd² again, and after that anon
That other fire was quaint, and all agone :
And as it quaint, it made a whisteling,
As doth a brande wet in its burning.
And at the brandes end outran anon
As it were bloody droppes many one :
For which so sore aghast was Emily,
That she was well-nigh mad, and gan to cry,
For she ne wist³ what it signified ;
But onely for fear⁴ thus she cried,
And wept, that it was pity for to hear.
And therewithal Diana gan appear
With bow in hand, right as an huntress,
And said⁵ ; " Daughter, stint⁶ thine heaviness.

Among the goddess high it is affirm'd,
And by eternal word writ and confirm'd,
Thou shalt be wedded unto one of tho⁷
That have for thee so much⁸ care and woe :
But unto which of them I may not tell.
Farewell, for here I may no longer dwell.
The fires which that on mine altar brenn,⁹
Shall thee declaren, ere that thou go henne,¹⁰
Thine aventure of love, as in this case."
And with that word, the arrows in the case¹¹
Of the goddess did clatter fast and ring,
And forth she went, and made a vanishing,
For which this Emily astonied was,
And said¹² ; " What amounteth this,¹³ alas !
I put me under thy protection,
Diane, and in thy disposition."
And home she went anon the next¹⁴ way.
This is th¹⁵ effect, there is no more to say.

The next¹⁶ hour of Mars following this
Arcite to the temple walked is
Of fierc¹⁷ Mars, to do his sacrifice
With all the rites of his pagan guise.
With piteous¹⁸ heart and high devotion.
Right thus to Mars he said his orison.
" O strong¹⁹ god, that in the regn²⁰es²¹ cold
Of Thrac²² honoured art, and lord y-hold,²³
And hast in every regne, and every land
Of arm²⁴es all the bridle in thine hand,
And them fortunest as thee list devise,²⁵
Accept of me my piteous sacrifice.
If so be that my youth²⁶ may deserve,
And that my might be worthy for to serve
Thy godhead, that I may be one of thine,
Then pray I thee to rue upon my pine,²⁷
For thilk²⁸ pain, and thilk²⁹ hot³⁰ fire,
In which thou whilom burnest³¹ for desire
Whenn³² that thou usedest³³ the beauty

Of fair³⁴ young³⁵ Venus, fresh and free,
And haddest her in arm³⁶es at thy will :
And though thee on³⁷es on a time misfill,³⁸
When Vulcanus had caught thee in his las,³⁹
And found thee ligg⁴⁰ing⁴¹ by his wife, alas !
For thilk⁴² sorrow that was in thine heart,
Have ruth⁴³ as well upon my pain⁴⁴es smart.
I am young and unconning,⁴⁵ as thou know'st,
And, as I trow,⁴⁶ with love offended most,
That e'er was any living creature :
For she, that doth⁴⁷ me all this woe endure,
Ne recketh ne'er whether I sink or fleet,⁴⁸
And well I wot, ere she me mercy hete,⁴⁹
I must with strength⁵⁰ win her in the place :
And well I wot, without⁵¹ help or grace
Of thee, ne may my strength⁵² not avail :
Then help me, lord, to-morr⁵³w in my bataille,
For thilk⁵⁴ fire that whilom burned thee,
As well as this fire that now burneth me ;
And do⁵⁵ that I to-morr⁵⁶w may have victory.
Mine be the travail, all thine be the glory.
Thy sovereign temple will I most honour
Of any place, and alway most labour
In thy pleasance and in thy craft⁵⁷es strong.
And in thy temple I will my banner hong,⁵⁸
And all the arm⁵⁹es of my company,
And evermore, until that day I die,
Eternal fire I will before thee find.
And eke to this my vow I will me bind :
My beard, my hair that hangeth long adown,
That never yet hath felt offension⁶⁰
Of razor nor of shears, I will thee give,
And be thy tru⁶¹e servant while I live.
Now, lord, have ruth upon my sorrows sore,
Give me the victory, I ask no more."

The prayer stint⁶² of Arcite the strong,
The ring⁶³es on the temple door that hong,
And eke the door⁶⁴es, clattered full fast,
Of which Arcite somewhat was aghast.
The fires burn'd upon the altar bright,
That it gan all the temple for to light ;
A sweet⁶⁵ smell anon the ground up gaf,⁶⁶
And Arcite anon his hand up haf,⁶⁷
And more incense into the fire he cast,
With other rit⁶⁸es more, and at the last
The statue of Mars began his hauberk ring ;
And with that sound he heard a murmuring
Full low and dim, that said⁶⁹ thus, " Victory."

For which he gave to Mars honour and glory.
And thus with joy, and hop⁷⁰es well to fare,
Arcite anon unto his inn doth fare,
As fain⁷¹ as fowl is of the bright⁷² sun.

And right anon such strife there is begun
For thilk⁷³ granting,⁷⁴ in the heav'n above,
Betwixt⁷⁵ Venus the goddess of love,
And Mars the stern⁷⁶ god armipotent,
That Jupiter was busy it to stent :⁷⁷

1 Strange. 2 Went out and revived. 3 Cease.
4 Those. 5 Burn. 6 Hence. 7 Quiver.
8 To what does this amount? 9 Nearest.
10 Implying, pious. 11 Realm. 12 Held.
13 Suggest fortune at thy pleasure.
14 Pity my anguish. 15 That.
16 Didst enjoy; Latin, "utor."
17 Thou wert unlucky.
18 Net, snare; the invisible toils in which Hephaestus

caught Ares and the faithless Aphrodite, and exposed them to the "inextinguishable laughter" of Olympus.
19 Lying. 20 Pity. 21 Ignorant, simple.
22 Believe. 23 Cause. 24 Fleet, swim.
25 Promise, vouchsafe. 26 Cause.
27 Hang.
28 End. 29 The offence, indignity.
30 Heaved, lifted. 31 Arose from the ground.
32 Glad.
33 That concession of Arcite's prayer. 34 Step.

Till that the palſ Saturnus the cold,¹
That knew so many of adventures old,
Found in his old experience such an art,
That he full soon hath pleased every part.
As sooth is said, eld² hath great advantage,
In eld is both wisdom and usæge :³

Men may the old out-run, but not out-rede.⁴
Saturn anon, to stint the strife and drede,
Albeit that it is against his kind,
Of all this strife gan a remedy find.

"My dearſ daughter Venus," quoth Saturn,
"My course,⁵ that hath so widſ for to turn,
Hath morſ power than wot any man.
Mine is the drowning in the sea so wan ;
Mine is the prison in the darkſ cote,⁶
Mine the strangling and hanging by the throat,
The murmur, and the churlish rebelling,
The groyning,⁷ and the privy poisoning.
I do vengeance and plein⁸ correction,
While I dwell in the sign of the lion.

Mine is the ruin of the highſ halls,
The falling of the towers and the walls
Upon the miner or the carpenter :
I slew Samson in shaking the pillar :
Mine also be the maladiſ cold,
The darkſ treasons, and the castſ old :
My looking is the father of pestilence.
Now weep no more, I shall do diligence
That Palamon, that is thine owen knight,
Shall have his lady, as thou hast him hight.¹⁰
Though Mars shall help his knight, yet natheless
Betwixtſ you there must sometime be peace :
All be ye not of one complexion,
That each day causeth such diviſion.
I am thine aye,¹¹ ready at thy will ;
Weep now no more, I shall thy lust¹² fulfil."
Now will I stenten¹³ of the gods above,
Of Mars, and of Venus, goddess of love,
And tellſ you as plainly as I can
The great effect, for which that I began.

Great was the feast in Athens thilkſ¹⁴ day ;
And eke the lusty season of that May
Made every wight to be in such pleasance,
That all that Monday jousten they and dance,
And spenden it in Venus' high service.
But by the causſ that they shouldſ rise
Larly a-morrow for to see that fight,
Unto their restſ wentſ they at night.
And on the morrow, when the day gan spring,
Of horse and harness¹⁵ noise and clattering
There was in the hostelryes all about :
And to the palace rode there many a rout¹⁶
Of lordſ, upon steedſ and palfreys.
There mayst thou see devising of harness

So uncouth¹⁷ and so rich, and wrought so weel
Of goldsmithry, of brouding,¹⁸ and of steel ;
The shieldſ bright, the testers,¹⁹ and trap-
pures ;²⁰

Gold-hewen helmets, hauberks, coat-armures ;
Lordſ in parements²¹ on their coursſers,
Knightſ of retinue, and eke squiſers,
Nailing the spears, and helmſ buckling,
Guiding²² of shieldſ, with lainers²³ lacing ;
There as need is, they werſ nothing idle :
The foamy steeds upon the golden bridle
Gnawing, and fast the armourers also
With file and hammer pricking to and fro ;
Yeomen on foot, and knavſ²⁴ many one
With shortſ stavſ, thick as they may gon ;²⁵
Pipſ, trumpets, nakſes,²⁶ and clariouns,
That in the battle blowſ bloody souns ;
The palace full of people up and down,
Here three, there ten, holding their question,²⁷
Divining²⁸ of these Theban knightſ two.
Some saiden thus, some said it shall be so ;
Some helden with him with the blackſ beard,
Some with the ballſd,²⁹ some with the thick-
hair'd ;

Some said he lookſd grim, and wouldſ fight :
He had a sparth³⁰ of twenty pound of weight.
Thus was the hallſ full of divining³¹
Long after that the sunnſ gan up spring.
The great Theseus that of his sleep is waked
With minstrelsy, and noisſ that was made,
Held yet the chamber of his palace rich,
Till that the Theban knightſ both y-lich³¹
Honoured were, and to the palace fet.³²

Duke Theseus is at a window set,
Array'd right as he were a god in throne :
The people presseth thitherward full soon
Him for to see, and do him reverence,
And eke to hearken his heſt³³ and his sentence.³⁴
An herald on a scaffold made an O,³⁵
Till the noise of the people was y-do :³⁶
And when he saw the people of noise all still,
Thus shewed he the mighty Dukſ will.

"The lord hath of his high discretion
Considered that it were destruction
To gentle blood, to fighten in the guise
Of mortal battle now in this emprise :
Wherefore to shapſ³⁷ that they shall not die,
He will his firstſ purpose modify.
No man therefore, on pain of loss of life,
No manner³⁸ shot, nor poleaxe, nor short knife
Into the lists shall send, or thither bring.
Nor short sword for to stick with point biting
No man shall draw, nor bear it by his side.
And no man shall unto his fellow ride

1 Here, as in "Mars the Red," we have the person of the deity endowed with the supposed quality of the planet called after his name.

2 Age. 3 Experience.

4 Surpass in counsel; outwit.

5 Orbit; the astrologers ascribed great power to Saturn, and predicted "much debate" under his ascendancy; hence it was "against his kind" to compare the heavenly strife.

6 Cottage, cell. 7 Discontent.

8 Full.

9 Contrivances, plots.

10 Promised.

11 Grandfather; French, "aſeul."

12 Pleasure.

13 Cease speaking.

14 That.

15 Armour.

16 Train, retinue.

17 Rare.

18 Embroidering.

19 Head-pieces, helmets; from the French, "teste," "tête," head.

20 Trappings.

21 Ornamental garb; French, "parure," to deck.

22 Rubbing, polishing; Anglo-Saxon "gnidan," to rub.

23 Thongs; compare "lanyards."

24 Servants.

25 As close as they can walk.

26 Drums, used in the cavalry; Boccaccio's word is "nchiere."

27 Conversation. 28 Conjecturing.

29 Bald. 30 Double-headed axe; Latin, "bipennis."

31 Alike. 32 Fetched, brought.

33 Behest, command. 34 Discourse.

35 "Ho! ho!" to command attention; like "Oyes,"

the call for silence in law-courts or before proclamations.

36 Done. 37 Arrange, contrive. 38 Kind of.

But one course, with a sharp y-grounden spear :
Foin¹ if him list on foot, himself to wear.²
And he that is at mischief³ shall be take,
And not slain, but be brought unto the stake,
That shall be ordained on either side;
Thither he shall by force, and there abide.
And if so fall⁴ the chieftain be take
On either side, or elles slay his make,⁵
No longer then the tourneying shall last.
God speede you; go forth and lay on fast.
With long sword and with mace fight your fill.
Go now your way; this is the lord's will."
The voice of the people touched the heaven,
So loud⁶cried they with merry steven:⁶
"God savē such a lord that is so good,
He willesh no destruction of blood."

Up go the trumpets and the melody,
And to the listē rode the company
By ordinance,⁷ throughout the city large,
Hanged with cloth of gold, and not with sarge.⁸
Full like a lord this noble Duke gan ride,
And these two Thebans upon either side:
And after rode the queen and Emily,
And after them another company
Of one and other, after their degree.
And thus they passed thorough that city,
And to the listē camē they by time:
It was not of the day yet fully prime.⁹

When set was Theseus full rich and high,
Hippolyta the queen, and Emily,
And other ladies in their degrees about,
Unto the seatē presseth all the rout.
And westward, through the gatē under Mart,
Arcite, and eke the hundred of his part,
With banner red, is enter'd right anon;
And in the selvē¹⁰ moment Palamon
Is, under Venus, eastward in the place,
With banner white, and hardy cheer¹¹ and face.
In all the world, to seeken up and down,
So even¹² without variatiōn
There were such companiēs never tway.
For there was none so wise that couldē say
That any had of other avāntage
Of worthiness, nor of estate, nor age,
So even were they chosen for to guess.
And in two rāges fairē they them dress.¹³
When that their namēs read were every one,
That in their number guilē¹⁴ were there none,
Then were the gatēs shut, and oried was loud;
"Do now your dēvoir, youngē knights proud!"

The heralds left their pricking¹⁵ up and down.
Now ring the trumpet loud and clarion.
There is no more to say, but east and west
In go the spearē sadly¹⁶ in the rest;
In go the sharpē spurs into the side.
There see men who can joust, and who can ride.

¹ Fence, thrust.

² In peril or distress.

³ His equal, match.

⁴ In orderly array.

⁵ First quarter, between six and nine A.M.

⁶ Same, self-same; German, "derselbe."

⁷ Bold demeanour.

⁸ Arrange themselves in two ranks or rows.

⁹ Fraud.

¹⁰ Steadily.

¹¹ Concave part of breast, where lower ribs join cartilago ensiformis.

¹² Defend.

¹³ Happen.

¹⁴ Sound.

¹⁵ Serge, woollen cloth.

¹⁶ Equal.

¹⁷ Spurring, riding.

There ahiver shaftē upon ahielddē thiek;
He feeleth through the heartē-spoon¹⁷ the prik.
Up spring the spearē twenty foot on height;
Out go the swordē as the silver bright.
The helmē they to-hewen, and to-ahred;¹⁸
Out burst the blood, with sternē streamē red.
With mighty maces the bones they to-brest.¹⁹
He through the thickest of the throng gan
threat.²⁰

There stumble steedē strong, and down go all.
He rolleth under foot as doth a ball.

He foineth²¹ on his foe with a trunchoun,
And he him hurtleth with his horse adown.
He through the body hurt is, and with take,²²
Maugré his head, and brought unto the stake,
As forword²³ was, right there he must abide.
Another led is on that other side.

And sometime doth²⁴ them Theseus to rest,
Them to refresh, and drinken if them leat.²⁵

Full oft a day have thilkē²⁶ Thebans two
Together met, and wrought each other woe:
Unhorsed hath each other of them tway.²⁷
There was no tiger in the vale of Galaphay,²⁸
When that her whelp is stole, when it is lite,²⁹
So cruel on the hunter, as Arcite
For jealous heart upon this Palamon:
Nor in Belmarie³⁰ there is no fall liōn,
That hunted is, or for his hunger wood,³¹
Nor of his prey desireth so the blood,
As Palamon to slay his foe Arcite.

The jealous strokes upon their helmets bite;
Out runneth blood on both their sidē red,
Sometime an end there is of every deed.

For ere the sun unto the restē went,
The strongē king Emetrius gan hent³²
This Palamon, as he fought with Arcite,
And made his sword deep in his flesh to bite,
And by the force of twenty is he take,
Unyielding, and is drawn unto the stake.
And in the rescue of this Palamon

The strongē king Licurgus is borne down:
And king Emetrius for all his strength
Is borne out of his saddle a sword's length,
So hit him Palamon ere he were take:
But all for nought; he was brought to the stake:
His hardy heartē might him helpē naught,
He must abidē, when that he was caught,
By force, and eke by compositiōn.³³

Who sorroweth now but woful Palamon
That must no morē go again to fight?
And when that Theseus had seen that sight,
Unto the folk that foughtē thus each one,
He cried, "Ho! no more, for it is done!
I will be truē judge, and not party.
Arcite of Thebes shall have Emily,
That by his fortune hath her fairly won."

¹⁸ Strike in pieces; "to" before a verb implies extraordinary violence in the action denoted.

¹⁹ Burst, shatter.

²⁰ Push his way; "he" refers impersonally to any of the combatants.

²¹ Thrusteth.

²² Afterwards taken.

²³ Pleased.

²⁴ Those.

²⁵ Galapha, in Mauritania.

²⁶ See note 5, page 18.

²⁷ Seize, assail.

²⁸ By the bargain, that whoever was brought to the stake, or barrier, should be out of the fight.

²⁹ Caused.

³⁰ Twice.

³¹ Little.

³² Mad.

Anon there is a noise of people gone,
For joy of this, so loud and high withal,
It seemed that the listës shouldë fall.

What can now fairë Venus do above?
What saith she now? what doth this queen of love?

But weepeth so, for wanting of her will,
Till that her tearës in the listës fill:¹
She said: "I am ashamed doubtless."
Saturnus saidë: "Daughter, hold thy peace.
Mars hath his will, his knight hath all his boon,
And by mine head thou shalt be eased² soon."

The trumpeters with the loud minstrelsy,
The heralds, that full loudë yell and cry,
Be in their joy for weal of Dan³ Arcite.
But hearken me, and stintë noise a lite,⁴
What a miräole there befell anon.
This fierce Arcite hath off his helm y-done,
And on a courser for to shew his face
He pricketh endëlong⁵ the largë place,
Looking upward upon this Emily;
And she again him cast a friendly eye
(For women, as to speaken in commüne,⁶
They follow all the favour of fortune),
And was all his in cheer,⁷ as his in heart.
Out of the ground a fire infernal start,
From Pluto sent, at request of Saturn,
For which his horse for fear began to turn,
And leap aside, and founder⁸ as he leap:
And ere that Arcite may take any keep,⁹
He pight him on the pummel¹⁰ of his head,
That in the place he lay as he were dead,
His breast to-bursten with his saddle-bow.
As black he lay as any coal or crow,
So was the blood y-run into his face.
Anon he was y-borne out of the place
With heartë sore, to Theseus' palace.
Then was he carven¹¹ out of his harness,
And in a bed y-brought full fair and blive,¹²
For he was yet in mem'ry and alive,
And always crying after Emily.

Duke Theseus, with all his company,
Is comë home to Athens his city,
With allë bliss and great solemnity.
Albeit that this aventure was fall,¹³
He wouldë not discomförtë¹⁴ them all.
Men said eke, that Arcite should not die,
He should be healed of his malady.
And of another thing they were as fain,¹⁵
That of them allë was there no one slain,
All¹⁶ were they sorely hurt, and namely¹⁷ one,
That with a spear was thirled¹⁸ his breast-bone.
To other woundës, and to broken arms,
Some hadden salvës, and some hadden charms:
And pharmacies of herbes, and ekë save¹⁹
They dranken, for they would their livës have.
For which this noble Duke, as he well can,
Comförteth and honoureth every man,

And madë revel all the longë night,
Unto the strangë lordës, as was right.
Nor there was holden no discomförting,
But as at jousts or at a tourneying;
For soothly there was no discomfiture,
For falling is not but an aventure.²⁰
Nor to be led by force unto a stake
Unyielding, and with twenty knighs y-take
One person all alone, withouten mo',
And harried²¹ forth by armës, foot, and toe,
And eke his steedë driven forth with staves,
With footmen, bothë yeomen and eke knaves,²²
It was arettëd²³ him no villainy:
There may no man clepen it cowardy.²⁴
For which anon Duke Theseus let cry,—²⁵
To stenten²⁶ allë rancour and envy,—
The gree²⁷ as well on one side as the other,
And either side alike, as other's brother:
And gave them giftës after their degree,
And held a feastë fully dayës three:
And conveyed the kingës worthily
Out of his town a journëe²⁸ largëly.
And home went every man the rightë way,
There was no more but "Farewell, Have good day."

Of this battäille I will no more indite,
But speak of Palamon and of Arcite.

Swellëth the breast of Arcite, and the sore
Increasëth at his heartë more and more.
The clotted blood, for any leachë-craft,²⁹
Corrupteth, and is in his bouk y-laft,³⁰
That neither veinë-blood nor ventousing,³¹
Nor drink of herbes may be his helping.
The virtue expulsive or animal,
From thilkë virtue called natural,
Nor may the venom voidë, nor expel.
The pipës of his lungs began to swell,
And every laeret³² in his breast adown
Is shent³³ with venom and corruptiön.
Him gaineth³⁴ neither, for to get his life,
Vomit upward, nor downward laxative;
All is to-bursten thilkë regiön;
Nature hath now no dominatiön.
And certainly where nature will not wiche,³⁵
Farewell physio; go bear the man to chirch.³⁶
This all and some is, Arcite must die.
For which he sendeth after Emily,
And Palamon, that was his cousin dear.
Then said he thus, as ye shall after hear.

"Nought may the woful spirit in mine heart
Declare one point of all my sorrows' smart
To you, my lady, that I love the most;
But I bequeath the service of my ghost³⁷
To you aboven every creature,
Since that my life ne may no longer dure.
Alas the woe! alas, the painës strong
That I for you have suffered, and so long!
Alas the death! alas, mine Emily!

1 Fell. 2 Contented. 3 Lord. 4 Keep silence.
5 Rides from end to end. 6 Generally speaking.
7 Countenance, outward show. 8 Stumble.
9 Care. 10 Pitched him on the top. 11 Out.
12 Quickly; "belive" is still used in Scotland to mean by and by, immediately. 13 Befallen.
14 Discourage. 15 Glad. 16 Although.
17 Especially. 18 Pierced.
19 The herb sage; Latin, "salvia."

20 Chance, accident. 21 Dragged, hurried.
22 Servants. 23 Imputed to him as no disgrace.
24 Call it cowardice. 25 Caused to be proclaimed.
26 Stop. 27 Prize, merit. 28 Day's journey.
29 Surgical skill. 30 Left in his body.
31 Neither opening veins nor cupping; French, "ventouser," to cup. 32 Sinew, muscle.
33 Destroyed. 34 Availëth. 35 Work.
36 Church. 37 Spirit.

Alas departing¹ of our company !
 Alas, mine heart's queen ! alas, my wife !
 Mine heart's lady, ender of my life !
 What is this world ? what askē men to have ?
 Now with his love, now in his coldē grave
 Alone, withouten any company.
 Farewell, my sweet, farewell, mine Emily,
 And softly take me in your armēs tway,
 For love of God, and hearken what I say.
 I have here with my cousin Palamon
 Had strife and rancour many a day agone,
 For love of you, and for my jealousy.
 And Jupiter so wis my soulē gie,²
 To speaken of a servant properly,
 With allē circumstances truly,
 That is to say, truth, honour, and knighthead,
 Wisdom, humbles,³ estate, and high kindred,
 Freedom, and all that longeth to that art,
 So Jupiter have of my soulē part,
 As in this world right now I know not one,
 So worthy to be lov'd as Palamon,
 That serveth you, and will do all his life.
 And if that you shall ever be a wife,
 Forget not Palamon, the gentle man."

And with that word his speech to fail began.
 For from his feet up to his breast was come
 The cold of death, that had him overnomen.⁴
 And yet moreover in his armēs two
 The vital strength is lost, and all ago.⁵
 Only the intellect, withoutē more,
 That dwelled in his heartē sick and sore,
 Gan failē, when the heartē feltē death ;
 Dusked⁶ his eyen two, and fail'd his breath.
 But on his lady yet he cast his eye ;
 His lastē word was ; " Mercy, Emily !"
 His spirit changed house, and wentē there,
 As I came never I cannot tell where.⁷
 Therefore I stent,⁸ I am no divinister ;⁹
 Of soulēs find I nought in this register.
 Ne me list not th' opinions to tell
 Of them, though that they writen where they
 dwell ;

Arcite is cold, there Mars his soulē gie.¹⁰
 Now will I speakē forth of Emily.

Shriek'd Emily, and howled Palamon,
 And Theseus his sister took anon
 Swooning, and bare her from the corpse away.
 What helpeth it to tarry forth the day,
 To tellē how she wept both eve and morrow ?
 For in such cases women have such sorrow,
 When that their husbands be from them y-go,¹¹
 That for the morē part they sorrow so,
 Or ellēs fall into such malady,
 That at the lastē certainly they die.
 Infinite be the sorrows and the tears
 Of oldē folk, and folk of tender years,
 In all the town, for death of this Theban :

¹ The severance.

² So surely guide my soul.

³ Humility.

⁴ Overtaken, overcome.

⁵ Gone.

⁶ Grew dim.

⁷ Went whither I cannot tell you, as I was never there.

⁸ Refrain. Tyrwhitt thinks that Chaucer is sneering at Boccaccio's pompous account of the passage of Arcite's soul to heaven. Up to this point, the description of the death-scene is taken literally from the "Theseida."

⁹ Diviner ; or divine.

¹⁰ Guide.

¹¹ Gone.

¹² Rank, condition.

For him there weepeth bothē child and man.
 So great a weeping was there none certāin,
 When Hector was y-brought, all fresh y-alain,
 To Troy : alas ! the pity that was there,
 Scratchē of cheeks, and rendē eke of hair.
 "Why wouldest thou be dead ?" these women
 cry,

"And haddest gold enough, and Emily."

No manner man might gladde Theseus,
 Saving his oldē father Egeus,
 That knew this worldē's transmutatioun,
 As he had seen it changen up and down,
 Joy after woe, and woe after gladness ;
 And shewed him example and likeness.
 "Right as there diēd never man," quoth he,
 "That he no liv'd in earth in some degree,¹²
 Right so there lived never man," he said,
 "In all this world, that sometime he not diēd.
 This world is but a throughfare full of woe,
 And we be pilgrims, passing to and fro :
 Death is an end of every worldly sore."
 And over all this said he yet much more
 To this effect, full wisely to exhort
 The people, that they should them recomfōrt.

Duke Theseus, with all his busy cure,¹³
 Casteth about,¹⁴ where that the sepulture
 Of good Arcite may best y-maked be,
 And eke most honourable in his degree.
 And at the last he took conclusioun,
 That there as first Arcite and Palamon
 Haddē for love the battle them between,
 That in that selvē¹⁵ grovē, sweet and green,
 There as he had his amorous desires,
 His cōmplaint, and for love his hotē fire,
 He wouldē make a fire,¹⁶ in which th' office
 Of funeral he might all accomplice ;
 And let anon command¹⁷ to hack and hew
 The oaks old, and lay them on a rew¹⁸
 In culpons,¹⁹ well arrayed for to brenne.²⁰
 His officers with swiftē feet they renne²¹
 And ride anon at his commandement.
 And after this, Duke Theseus hath sent
 After a bier, and it all oversprad
 With cloth of gold, the richest that he had ;
 And of the samē suit he clad Arcite.
 Upon his handēs were his gloves white,
 Eke on his head a crown of laurel green,
 And in his hand a sword full bright and keen.
 He laid him bare the visage²² on the bier,
 Therewith he wept, that pity was to hear.
 And, for the people shouldē see him all,
 When it was day he brought them to the hall,
 That roareth of the crying and the soun'.²³
 Then came this woful Theban, Palamon,
 With sluttery beard, and ruggy ashy hairs,²⁴
 In cloths black, y-dropped all with tears,
 And (passing over weeping Emily)

¹³ Care ; Latin, "cura."

¹⁴ Deliberates.

¹⁵ Self-same.

¹⁶ A funeral pyre.

¹⁷ Caused orders straightway to be given.

¹⁸ Row.

¹⁹ Logs, pieces.

²⁰ Well arranged to burn.

²¹ Run.

²² With face uncovered.

²³ Made by the people who saw him lie in state.

²⁴ With neglected beard, and rough hair strewn with ashes. "Flotery" is the general reading ; but "sluttery" seems to be more in keeping with the picture of abandonment to grief.

The ruefullest of all the company.
 And inasmuch as¹ the service should be
 The more noble and rich in its degree,
 Duke Theseus let forth three steeds bring,
 That trapped were in steel all glittering.
 And covered with the arms of Dan Arcite.
 Upon these steeds, that were great and white,
 There sat folk, of whom one bare his shield,
 Another his spear in his hand held;
 The third bare with him his bow Turkeis,²
 Of brent³ gold was the case⁴ and the harness:
 And rid forth a pace with sorrowful cheer⁵
 Toward the grove, as ye shall after hear.

The noblest of the Greekes that there were
 Upon their shoulders carried the bier,
 With black pace, and eyen red and wet,
 Throughout the city, by the master street,⁶
 That spread was all with black, and wondrous
 high

Right of the same is all the street y-wrie.⁷
 Upon the right hand went old Egeus,
 And on the other side Duke Theseus,
 With vessels in their hand of gold full fine,
 All full of honey, milk, and blood, and wine;
 Eke Palamon, with a great company;
 And after that came woful Emily,
 With fire in hand, as was that time the guise,⁸
 To do th' office of funeral service.

High labour, and full great appareling⁹
 Was at the service, and the pyre-making,
 That with its green¹⁰ top the heaven raught,¹⁰
 And twenty fathom broad its armes straight:¹¹
 This is to say, the boughes were so broad.
 Of straw first there was laid many a load.
 But how the pyre was maked up on height,
 And eke the names how the trees hight,¹²
 As oak, fir, birch, asp,¹³ alder, holm, poplère,
 Will'w, elm, plane, ash, box, chestnut, lind,¹⁴
 laurère,

Maple, thorn, beech, hazel, yew, whipul tree,
 How they were fell'd, shall not be told for me;
 Nor how the goddes¹⁵ rannen up and down
 Disherited of their habitation,
 In which they wonned¹⁶ had in rest and peace,
 Nymphes, Faunés, and Hamadryades;
 Nor how the beastes and the birdes all
 Fledden for fear, when the wood gan fall;
 Nor how the ground aghast¹⁷ was of the light,
 That was not wont to see the sunne bright;
 Nor how the fire was couched¹⁸ first with
 stre,¹⁹

And then with dry stickes cloven in three,

And then with green wood and spicery,²⁰
 And then with cloth of gold and with pierrie,²¹
 And garlands hanging with full many a flower,
 The myrrh, the incense with so sweet odour;
 Nor how Arcite lay among all this,
 Nor what riches about his body is;
 Nor how that Emily, as was the guise,
 Put in²² the fire of funeral service;
 Nor how she swooned when she made the fire,
 Nor what she spake, nor what was her desire;
 Nor what jewels men in the fire then cast
 When that the fire was great and burned fast;
 Nor how some cast their shield, and some their
 spear,

And of their vestiments, which that they
 wear,

And cuppes full of wine, and milk, and blood,
 Into the fire, that burnt as it were wood;²³

Nor how the Greekes with a hugé rout²⁴
 Three times ridden all the fire about
 Upon the left hand, with a loud shouting,
 And thrice with their spears clattering;
 And thrice how the ladies gan to cry;
 Nor how that led was homeward Emily;
 Nor how Arcite is burnt to ashes cold;
 Nor how the lykè-wakè²⁵ was y-hold
 All thilkè²⁶ night, nor how the Greekes play
 The wakè-plays,²⁷ ne keep²⁸ I not to say:
 Who wrestled best naked, with oil anoint,
 Nor who that bare him best in no disjoint.²⁹
 I will not tell eke how they all are gone
 Home to Athenes when the play is done;
 But shortly to the point now will I wend,³⁰
 And maken of my long tale an end.

By process and by length of certain years
 All stinted³¹ is the mourning and the tears
 Of Greekes, by one general assent.
 Then seemed me there was a parlement³²
 At Athens, upon certain points and cas:³³
 Amonges the which points y-spoken was
 To have with certain countries alliaunce,
 And have of Thebans full obeisance.
 For which this noble Theseus anon
 Let³⁴ send after the gentle Palamon,
 Unwist³⁵ of him what was the cause and why:
 But in his blackè clothes sorrowfully
 He came at his commandment on hie;³⁶
 Then sentè Theseus for Emily.

When they were set,³⁷ and hush'd was all the
 place

And Theseus abided³⁸ had a space
 Ere any word came from his wisè breast

¹ In order that.

² Turkish.

³ Burnished.

⁴ Quiver.

⁵ They ride out slowly—at a foot pace—with sorrowful air.

⁶ Main street; so Froissart speaks of "le souverain carrefour."

⁷ Covered, hid; Anglo-Saxon, "wrgan," to veil.

⁸ Custom. ⁹ Preparation. ¹⁰ Reached.

¹¹ Stretched. ¹² Were called. ¹³ Aspen.

¹⁴ Linden, lime. ¹⁵ The forest delites. ¹⁶ Dwelt.

¹⁷ Terrified. ¹⁸ Laid. ¹⁹ Straw.

²⁰ Spices. ²¹ Precious stones; French, "pierreries."

²² Applied the funeral torch. The "guise" was, among the ancients, for the nearest relative of the deceased to do this, with averted face. ²³ Mad.

²⁴ Procession. It was the custom for soldiers to march thrice around the funeral pile of an emperor or

general; "on the left hand" is added, in reference to the belief that the left hand was propitious—the Roman augur turning his face southward, and so placing on his left hand the east, whence good omens came. With the Greeks, however, their augurs facing the north, it was just the contrary. The confusion, frequent in classical writers, is complicated here by the fact that Chaucer's description of the funeral of Arcite is taken from Statius' "Thebaid"—from a Roman's account of a Greek solemnity.

²⁵ Watching by the remains of the dead; from Anglo-Saxon, "lice," a corpse; German, "Leichnam."

²⁶ That. ²⁷ Funeral games. ²⁸ Care.

²⁹ In any danger, contest. ³⁰ Come. ³¹ Ended.

³² Assembly for consultation. ³³ Cases, incidents.

³⁴ Caused. ³⁵ Unknown. ³⁶ In haste.

³⁷ Seated. ³⁸ Waited.

His eyen set he there as was his lest,¹
 And with a sad visage he sighed still,
 And after that right thus he said his will.
 "The first² mover of the cause above
 When he first made the fair³ chain of love,
 Great was th' effect, and high was his intent;
 Well wist he why, and what thereof he meant:
 For with that fair⁴ chain of love he bond⁵
 The fire, the air, the water, and the lond
 In certain bond⁶s, that they may not flee:⁷
 That sam⁸e prince and mover eke," quoth he,
 "Hath stabli⁹sh'd, in this wretched world adown,
 Certain of day¹⁰s and durati¹¹on
 To all that are engender'd in this place,
 Over the which¹² day they may not pace,¹³
 All¹⁴ may they yet their day¹⁵s well abridge.
 There needeth no authority to allege
 For it is proved by experience;
 But that me list declar¹⁶e my sent¹⁷ence.¹⁸
 Then may men by this order well discern,
 That thilk¹⁹ mover stable is and etern.
 Well may men know, but that it be a fool,
 That every part deriveth from its whole.
 For nature hath not ta'en its beginning
 Of no partie nor cantle²⁰ of a thing,
 But of a thing that perfect is and stable,
 Descending so, till it be corruptible.
 And therefore of his wis²¹e purveyance²²
 He hath so well beset²³ his ordinance,
 That species of things and progressi²⁴ons
 Shallen endure²⁵ by successi²⁶ons,
 And not etern, withouten any lie:
 This mayst thou understand and see at eye.
 Lo th' oak, that hath so long a nourishing
 From the time that it ginneth first to spring,
 And hath so long a life, as ye may see,
 Yet at the last y-wasted is the tree.
 Consider eke, how that the hard²⁷ stone
 Under our feet, on which we tread and gon,²⁸
 Yet wasteth, as it lieth by the way.
 The broad²⁹ river some time waxeth drey.³⁰
 The great³¹ town³²s see we wane and wend.³³
 Then may ye see that all things have an end.
 Of man and woman see we well also,
 That need³⁴es in one of the term³⁵s two,—
 That is to say, in youth or else in age,—
 He must be dead, the king as shall a page;
 Some in his bed, some in the deep³⁶ sea,
 Some in the larg³⁷ field, as ye may see:
 There helpeth nought, all go that ilk³⁸ way:³⁹
 Then may I say that all⁴⁰ thing must die.
 What maketh this but Jupiter the king?
 The which is prince, and cause of all⁴¹ thing,
 Converting all unto his proper will,
 From which it is derived, sooth to tell.
 And hereagainst no creature alive,
 Of no degree, availeth for to strive.

¹ He fixed his eyes where it pleased him.

² Bound.

³ Chaucer here borrows from Boethius, who says:

"Hanc rerum seriem ligat,
 Terras ac pelagus regens,
 Et celo imperitans, amor."

⁴ Pass.

⁵ Although.

⁶ Sentiment, opinion.

⁷ This same.

⁸ No part or piece.

⁹ Providence; "He" is the "first mover."

¹⁰ Arranged, ordered.

¹¹ Walk.

¹² Dry.

¹³ Go, disappear.

¹⁴ The same.

Then is it wisdom, as it thinketh me,
 To make a virtue of necessity,
 And take it well, that we may not eschew,¹⁵
 And nam¹⁶ly what to us all is due.
 And whoso grudgeth¹⁷ ought, he doth folly,
 And rebel is to him that all may gio.¹⁸
 And certainly a man hath most hono¹⁹ur
 To dien in his excellence and flower,
 When he is sicker²⁰ of his good²¹e name.
 Then hath he done his friend, nor him,²² no shame;
 And gladder ought his friend be of his death,
 When with hono²³ur is yielded up his breath,
 Than when his name appalled is for age;²⁴
 For all forgotten is his vassalage.²⁵
 Then is it best, as for a worthy fame,
 To dien when a man is best of name.
 The contrary of all this is wilfulness.
 Why grudg²⁶e we, why have we heaviness,
 That good Arcite, of chivalry the flower,
 Departed is, with duty and hono²⁷ur,
 Out of this foul²⁸ prison of this life?
 Why grudg²⁹e here his cousin and his wife
 Of his welfare, that loved him so well?
 Can he them thank?—nay, God wot, never a
 deal,—³⁰

That both his soul and eke themselves offend,³¹
 And yet they may their lust³²s not amend.³³
 What may I concl³⁴ude of this long³⁵ s³⁶erie,³⁷
 But after sorrow I red³⁸e us to be merry,
 And thank³⁹e Jupiter for all his grace?
 And ere that we depart⁴⁰e from this place,
 I red⁴¹e that we make of sorrows two
 One perfect joy⁴²e lasting evermo':
 And look now where meet sorrow is herein,
 There will I first amenden and begin.
 "Sister," quoth he, "this is my full assent,
 With all th' advice here of my parlement,
 That gentle Palamon, your owen knight,
 That serveth you with will, and heart, and
 might,

And ever hath, since first time ye him knew,
 That ye shall of your grace upon him rue,⁴³
 And take him for your husband and your lord:
 Lend me your hand, for this is our accord.
 Let see⁴⁴ now of your womanly pity.
 He is a king⁴⁵e's brother's son, pardie.⁴⁶
 And though he were a poor⁴⁷ bachel⁴⁸ere,
 Since he hath served you so many a year,
 And had for you so great adversity,
 It must⁴⁹e be considered, 'lieveth me.⁵⁰
 For gentle mercy oweth to passen right."⁵¹
 Then said he thus to Palamon the knight;
 "I trow there needeth little sermoning
 To mak⁵²e you assent⁵³e to this thing.
 Come near, and take your lady by the hand."

Betwixt them was made anon the band,
 That hight matrimony or marriage,

¹⁵ Escape, avoid.

¹⁶ Murmurs at.

¹⁷ Direct, guide.

¹⁸ Certain.

¹⁹ Himself.

²⁰ Grown pale, decayed, by old age.

²¹ Valour, prowess, service.

²² Never a jot, whit.

²³ Hurt.

²⁴ Cannot control or amend their desires.

²⁵ Series; string of remarks.

²⁶ Counsel.

²⁷ Have pity.

²⁸ Make display.

²⁹ By God.

³⁰ Believe me.

³¹ Ought to be rightly directed; "oweth" is the present tense, as "ought" is the past, of "owe."

By all the counsel of the baronage.
And thus with all blis and melody
Hath Palamon y-wedded Emily.
And God, that all this wîd world hath wrought,
Send him his love, that hath it dearly bought.
For now is Palamon in all his weal,
Living in blis, in riches, and in heal;¹
And Emily him loves so tenderly,
And he her serveth all so gently,
That never was there wordis them between
Of jealousy, nor of none other teen,²
Thus endeth Palamon and Emily;
And God save all this fair company.

THE MILLER'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.

WHEN that the Knight had thus his talis told,
In all the rout was neither young nor old,
That he not said it was a noble story,
And worthy to be drawn to memory;³
And namly the gentles every one.⁴
Our Host then laugh'd and swore, "So may I
gon,⁵

This goes aright; unbuckled is the mail;⁶
Let see now who shall tell another tale:
For truly this game is well begun.
Now telleth ye, Sir Monk, if that ye conne,⁷
Somewhat, to quiten⁸ with the Knight's tale."
The Miller that fordrunken was all pale,⁹
So that unnethe¹⁰ upon his horse he sat,
He would avenge¹¹ neither hood nor hat,
Nor abide¹² no man for his courtesy,
But in Pilate's voice¹³ he gan to cry,
And swore by armes, and by blood, and bones,
"I can a noble tale for the nones,¹⁴
With which I will now quite⁸ the Knight's
tale."

Our Host saw well how drunk he was of ale,
And said; "Robin, abide, my levis¹⁵ brother,
Some better man shall tell us first another:
Abide, and let us work¹⁶ thriftily."¹⁶
"By Godde's soul," quoth he, "that will not I,
For I will speak, or elles go my way!"
Our Host answer'd; "Tell on a devil way;¹⁷
Thou art a fool; thy wit is overcome."
"Now hearken," quoth the Miller, "all and
some:

But first I make a protestacioun.
That I am drunk, I know it by my soun:
And therefore if that I mispeak or say,
Wise¹⁸ is it the ale of Southwark, I you pray:
For I will tell a legend and a life

¹ Health; German, "Hell."

² Cause of anger, vexation.

³ Recorded.

⁴ All the gentler members of the company, in especial.

⁵ Prosper.

⁶ The budget is opened.

⁷ Know how.

⁸ Match, requite.

⁹ Was all pale with drunkenness.

¹⁰ Hardly, with difficulty.

¹¹ Unveil, uncover.

¹² Await, give way to.

¹³ Pilate, an unpopular personage in the mystery-plays of the middle ages, was probably represented as having a gruff, harsh voice.

¹⁴ Occasion.

¹⁵ Dear.

¹⁶ Prudently, civilly.

Both of a carpenter and of his wife,
How that a clerk hath set the wright's cap."¹⁹
The Reeve answer'd and said, "Stint thy
clap,²⁰

Let be thy lewde drunken harlotry.

It is a sin, and eke a great folly

To apeiren²¹ any man, or him defame,

And eke to bringis wives in evil name.

Thou may'st enough of other thingis sayn."

This drunken Miller spake full soon again,

And said, "Levis brother Osweold,

Who hath no wife, he is no cuckold.

But I say not therefore that thou art one;

There be full goodis wives many one.

Why art thou angry with my tale now?

I have a wife, pardie, as well as thou,

Yet n'old²² I, for the oxen in my plough,

Taken upon me more than enough,

To deemen²³ of myself that I am one;

I will believ²⁴ well that I am none.

An husband should not be inquisitive

Of Godde's privity, nor of his wife.

So he may findis Godde's foison²⁵ there,

Of the remnant needeth not to enquire."

What should I more say, but that this
Millere

He would his wordis for no man forbear,

But told his churliah²⁶ tale in his mannere;

Me thinketh, that I shall rehearse it here.

And therefore every gentle wight I pray,

For Godde's love to deem not that I say

Of evil intent, but that I must rehearse

Their talis all, be they better or worse,

Or elles falsen²⁷ some of my mattere.

And therefore whoso list it not to hear,

Turn o'er the leaf, and choose another tale;

For he shall find enough, both great and smale,

Of storial²⁸ thing that toucheth gentiles,

And eke morality and holiness.

Blam²⁹ not me, if that ye choose amiss.

The Miller is a churl, ye know well this,—

So was the Reeve, with many other mo',

And harlotry³⁰ they toldis bothis two.

Advise you³¹ now, and put me out of blame;

And eke men should not make earnest of game.³²

THE TALE.

Whilom there was dwelling in Oxenford
A richis gnof,³³ that guestis held to board,³⁴
And of his craft he was a carpenter.
With him there was dwelling a poor scholér,
Had learned art, but all his fantasy
Was turned for to learn astrology.
He coude³⁵ a certain of conclusions

¹⁷ Devil take thee! an oath of impatience.

¹⁸ Blame; in Scotland, "to bear the wyte," is to bear the blame.

¹⁹ Befooled him.

²⁰ Hold thy tongue; stop thy noisy talk, which is like the clapper of thy mill.

²¹ Injure, abuse.

²² Would not.

²³ Judge.

²⁴ Abundance.

²⁵ Boorish, rude.

²⁶ Falstify.

²⁷ Historical, true things.

²⁸ Ribald, rough jesting tale.

²⁹ Consider; be advised.

³⁰ Jest, fun.

³¹ Miser; perhaps from Anglo-Saxon, "grasfan," to gnaw.

³² Took in boarders.

³³ Knew.

To deem¹ by interrogations,
If that men asked him in certain hours,
When that men should have drought or ellës
show'rs :

Or if men asked him what shouldë fall
Of everything, I may not reckon all.

This clerk was called Hendy² Nicholas ;
Of dern³ love he knew and of solace ;
And therewith he was sly and full privy,
And like a maiden meekë for to see.
A chamber had he in that hostelry
Alone, withouten any company,
Full fetialy y-dight⁴ with herbës swoot,⁵
And he himself was sweet as is the root
Of liquorice, or any setewall.⁶

His Almagest,⁷ and bookës great and small,
His astrolabe,⁸ belonging to his art,
His augrim stonës,⁹ layed fair apart
On shelvës couched¹⁰ at his beddë's head,
His press y-cover'd with a falding¹¹ red.
And all above there lay a gay psalt'ry
On which he made at nightës melody,
So sweetly, that all the chamber rang :
And *Angelus ad virginem*¹² he sang.
And after that he sung the king's note ;
Full often blessed was his merry throat.
And thus this sweet clerk his timë spent
After his friendës finding and his rent.¹³

This carpenter had wedded new a wife,
Which that he loved morë than his life :
Of eighteen year, I guess, she was of age.
Jealous he was, and held her narr'w in cage,
For she was wild and young, and he was old,
And deemed himself bëlike¹⁴ a cucköld.
He knew not Cato,¹⁵ for his wit was rude,
That bade a man wed his similitude.
Men shouldë wedden after their estate,
For youth and eld¹⁶ are often at debate.
But since that he was fallen in the snare,
He must endure (as other folk) his care.

Fair was this youngë wife, and therewithal
As any weasel her body gent¹⁷ and small.
A seint¹⁸ she weared, barred all of silk,

¹ Determine.

² Gentle, handsome.

³ Secret, earnest.

⁴ Neatly decked.

⁵ Sweet.

⁶ Valerian, setwall.

⁷ The book of Ptolemy the astronomer, which formed the canon of astrological science in the middle ages.

⁸ "Astrelagour," "astrelabore;" a mathematical instrument for taking the altitude of the sun or stars.

⁹ "Augrim" is a corruption of algorithm, the Arabian term for numeration: "augrim stonës," therefore, were probably marked with numerals, and used as counters.

¹⁰ Laid, set.

¹¹ Coarse cloth.

¹² The Angel's salutation to Mary; Luke i. 28. It was the "Ave Maria" of the Catholic Church service.

¹³ Attending to his friends, and providing for the cost of his lodging.

¹⁴ Perhaps.

¹⁵ Though Chaucer may have referred to the famous Censor, more probably the reference is merely to the "Moral Disticha," which go under his name, though written after his time; and in a supplement to which the quoted passage may be found.

¹⁶ Age. ¹⁷ Slim, neat. ¹⁸ Girdle, with silk stripes.

¹⁹ Apron; from Anglo-Saxon "barne," bosom or lap.

²⁰ Loin.

²¹ Plait, fold.

²² Not the underdress, but the robe or gown.

²³ Strings.

²⁴ Head-gear, kerchief; from French, "enveloppe," to wrap up.

²⁵ Certainly.

²⁶ Lascivious, liquorish.

²⁷ Arched.

²⁸ Pleasant to look upon.

²⁹ Young pear-tree.

A barm-cloth³⁰ eke as white as morning milk
Upon her lendës,³¹ full of many a gore.³²
White was her smock,³³ and broider'd all before,
And eke behind, on her collar about
Of coal-black silk, within and eke without.
The tapës³⁴ of her whitë volupere³⁵
Were of the samë suit of her collëre;
Her fillet broad of silk, and set full high :
And sickerly³⁶ she had a likerous³⁷ eye.
Full small y-pulled were her browës two,
And they were bent,³⁸ and black as any aloe.
She was well morë blisful on to see³⁹
Than is the newë perjenetë⁴⁰ tree ;
And softer than the wool is of a wether.
And by her girdle hung a purse of leather,
Tassel'd with silk, and pearlyd with latoun.⁴¹
In all this world to seeken up and down
There is no man so wise, that couldë thenche⁴²
So gay a popelot,⁴³ or such a wench.
Full brighter was the shining of her hue,
Than in the Tower the noble⁴⁴ forged new.
But of her song, it was as loud and yern,⁴⁵
As any swallow chittering on a barn.⁴⁶
Thereto⁴⁷ she couldë skip, and make a game,⁴⁸
As any kid or calf following his dame.
Her mouth was sweet as braket,⁴⁹ or as methë,⁵⁰
Or hoard of apples, laid in hay or heath.
Wincing⁵¹ she was as is a jolly colt,
Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.
A brooch she bare upon her low collëre,
As broad as is the boss of a bucklëre.
Her shoon were laced on her leggës high ;
She was a primerole,⁵² a piggeanie,⁵³
For any lord t' have ligging⁵⁴ in his bed,
Or yet for any good yeoman to wed.

Now, sir, and eft⁵⁵ sir, so befell the case,
That on a day this Hendy⁵⁶ Nicholas
Fell with this youngë wife to rage and play,⁵⁷
While that her husband was at Oseney,⁵⁸
As clerkës be full subtle and full quaint.
And privily he caught her by the quint,
And said ; " Y-wis,⁵⁹ but if I have my will,
For dern⁶⁰ love of thee, leman,⁶¹ I spill."⁶²

³⁰ Brass, latten, in the shape of pearls.

³¹ Could fancy, think of.

³² Puppet; butterfly; young wench.

³³ The noble new coined in the Tower, where was the Mint; nobles were gold coins of especial purity and brightness: "Ex auro nobilissimè, unde nobilis vocatus," says Vossius.

³⁴ Shril, lively; German, "gern," willingly, cheerfully.

³⁵ Barn. ³⁶ In addition to all this. ³⁷ Komp.

³⁸ Bragget, a sweet drink made of honey, spices, &c. In some parts of the country, a drink made from honeycomb, after the honey is extracted, is still called "bragwort."

³⁹ Metheglin, mead.

⁴⁰ Wanton, skittish. ⁴¹ Primrose.

⁴² A fond term, like "my duck;" from Anglo-Saxon, "piga," a young maid; but Tyrwhitt associates it with the Latin, "ocellus," little eye, a fondling term, and suggests that the "pig's-eye," which is very small, was applied in the same sense. Davenport and Butler both use the word pigmie, the first for "darling," the second literally for "eye;" and Bishop Gardner, "On True Obedience," in his address to the reader, says: "How softly she was wont to chirp him under the chin, and kiss him; how prettily she could talk to him (how doth my sweet heart, what saith now pig's-eye)."

⁴³ Lying.

⁴⁴ Again.

⁴⁵ Courteous.

⁴⁶ Toy; play the rogue.

⁴⁷ A once well-known abbey near Oxford.

⁴⁸ Assuredly.

⁴⁹ Earnest, cruel.

⁵⁰ My mistress. ⁵¹ Die, perish.

And heldē her fast by the haunchē bones,
 And saidē, "Leman, love me well at once,
 Or I will dien, all so God me save."
 And she sprang as a colt doth in the trave;¹
 And with her head she writhed fast away,
 And said; "I will not kiss thee, by my fay.²
 Why let be," quoth she, "let be, Nicholas,
 Or I will cry out harow and alas!³
 Do away your handēs, for your courtesy."
 This Nicholas gan mercy for to cry,
 And spake so fair, and proffer'd him so fast,
 That she her love him granted at the last,
 And swore her oath by Saint Thomas of Kent,
 That she would be at his commandement,
 When that she may her leisure well espy.
 "My husband is so full of jealousy,
 That but ⁴ ye waitē well, and be privy,
 I wot right well I am but dead," quoth she.
 "Ye mustē be full derne⁵ as in this case."
 "Nay, thereof care thee nought," quoth Nicho-

las:
 "A clerk had litherly beset his while,⁶
 But if ⁴ he could a carpenter beguile."
 And thus they were accorded and y-sworn
 To wait a time, as I have said beforen.
 When Nicholas had done thus every deal,⁷
 And thwacked her about the londēs well,
 He kis'd her sweet, and taketh his psal'try
 And playeth fast, and maketh melody.
 Then tell it thus, that to the parish church,
 Of Christē's owen workēs for to wirc,⁸
 This good wife went upon a holy day:
 Her forehead shone as bright as any day,
 So was it washen, when she left her werk.

Now was there of that church a parish clerk,
 The which that was y-cleped Absolon.
 Curl'd was his hair, and as the gold it shone,
 And strutted⁹ as a fannē large and broad;
 Full straight and even lay his jolly shode.¹⁰
 His rode¹¹ was red, his eyen grey as goose,
 With Paulē's window carved¹² on his shode.
 In hosen red he went full fetialy.¹³
 Y-clad he was full small and properly,
 All in a kirtle¹⁴ of a light weget;¹⁵
 Full fair and thickē be the pointēs set.
 And thereupon he had a gay surplice,
 As white as is the blossom on the rise.¹⁶
 A merry child he was, so God me save;
 Well could he letten blood, and clip, and shave,
 And make a charter of land, and a quittance.
 In twenty manners could he trip and dance,
 After the school of Oxenfordē tho,¹⁷

And with his leggēs castē to and fro;
 And playen songēs on a small ribble;¹⁸
 Thereto he sung sometimes a loud quibble.¹⁹
 And as well could he play on a gitern.²⁰
 In all the town was brewhouse nor tavern,
 That he not visited with his solas,²¹
 There as that any gaillard tapetere²² was.
 But sooth to say he was somedeal aquamous²³
 Of farting, and of speechē dangerous.

This Absolon, that jolly was and gay,
 Went with a censer on the holy day,
 Censing²⁴ tho wivēs of the parish fast;
 And many a lovely look he on them cast,
 And namēly²⁵ on this carpenter's wife:
 To look on her him thought a merry life.
 She was so proper, and sweet, and likerous.
 I dare well say, if she had been a mouse,
 And he a cat, he would her hent anon.²⁶
 This parish clerk, this jolly Absolon,
 Hath in his heartē such a love-longing!
 That of no wife took he none offering;
 For courtesy he said he wouldē none.
 The moon at night full clear and brightē shone,
 And Absolon his gitern hath y-taken,
 For paramours he thoughtē for to waken,
 And forth he went, jolif²⁷ and amorous,
 Till he came to the carpenter's house,
 A little after the cock had y-crow,
 And dressed him²⁸ under a shot²⁹ window,
 That was upon the carpenter's wall.
 He singeth in his voice gentle and small;
 "Now, dear lady, if thy will be,
 I pray that ye will rue³⁰ on me;"
 Full well accordant to his giterning.
 This carpenter awoke, and heard him sing,
 And spake unto his wife, and said anon,
 "What, Alison, hear'st thou not Absolon,
 That chanteth thus under our bower³¹ wall?
 And she answer'd her husband therewithal;
 "Yes, God wot, John, I hear him every deal."
 This passeth forth; what will ye bet³² than
 well?

From day to day this jolly Absolon
 So wooeth her, that him is woebegone.
 He waketh all the night, and all the day,
 To comb his lockēs broad, and make him gay.
 He wooeth her by means and by brocage,³³
 And swore he wouldē be her owen page.
 He singeth brokking³⁴ as a nightingale.
 He sent her piment,³⁵ mead, and spiced ale,
 And wafers³⁶ piping hot out of the glode;³⁷
 And, for she was of town, he proffer'd meed.³⁸

he did the French of Stratford at Bow. See note 25, page 18.

¹⁸ Rebeck, a kind of fiddle.

¹⁹ Treble.

²⁰ Guitar.

²¹ Mirth, sport.

²² Gay, licentious girl that served in a tavern.

²³ Somewhat squeamish.

²⁴ Burning incense for.

²⁵ Above all.

²⁶ Have soon caught.

²⁷ Jolly, joyous.

²⁸ Stationed himself.

²⁹ Projecting or bow window, whence it was possible

to shoot at any one approaching the door.

³⁰ Take pity.

³¹ Chamber.

³² Better.

³³ By presents and by agents, pimping, or brokerage.

³⁴ Quavering.

³⁵ A drink made with wine, honey, and spices.

³⁶ Cakes.

³⁷ Red-hot coal.

³⁸ Because she was town-bred, he offered wealth,

or money reward, for her love.

¹ Travise; a frame in which unruly horses were shod.

² Faith.
³ Haro! an old Norman cry for redress or aid. The "Chamur de Haro" was lately raised, under peculiar circumstances, as the prelude to a legal protest, in Jersey.

⁴ Unless.

⁵ Secret.

⁶ Ill spent his time.

⁷ Whit.

⁸ Work.

⁹ Stretched.

¹⁰ Head of hair.

¹¹ Complexion.

¹² His shoes ornamented like the windows of St Paul's, especially like the old rose-window.

¹³ Daintily, neatly.

¹⁴ A gown girt around the waist.

¹⁵ Sky colour.

¹⁶ Twig, bush; German, "Reis," a twig; "Reisig," a copse.

¹⁷ Then; Chaucer satirises the dancing of Oxford as

For some folk will be wonnen for richesse,
And some for strokes, and some with gentiles.
Sometimes, to show his lightness and mast'ry,
He playeth Herod¹ on a scaffold high.
But what availeth him as in this case?
So loveth she the Hendy Nicholas,
That Absolon may blow the bucke's horn:²
He had for all his labour but a scorn.
And thus she maketh Absolon her ape,
And all his earnest turneth to a jape.³
Full sooth is this proverb, it is no lie;
Men say right thus alway; the night sly
Maketh oft time the far lief to be loth.⁴
For though that Absolon be wood⁵ or wroth
Because that he far was from her sight,
This nigh Nicholas stood still in his light.
Now bear thee well, thou Hendy Nicholas,
For Absolon may wail and sing "Alas!"

And so befell, that on a Saturday
This carpenter was gone to Oseney,
And Hendy Nicholas and Alisoun
Accorded were to this conclusioun,
That Nicholas shall shapen him a wile⁶
The silly jealous husband to beguile;
And if so were the game went aright,
She should sleepen in his arms all night;
For this was her desire and his also.
And right anon, without wordes mo',
This Nicholas no longer would he tarry,
But doth full soft unto his chamber carry
Both meat and drink for a day or tway.
And to her husband bade her for to say,
If that he asked after Nicholas,
She should say, "She wist⁷ not where he was;
Of all the day she saw him not with eye;
She trowed⁸ he was in some malady,
For no cry that her maiden could him call
He would answer, for nought that might befall."
Thus passed forth all thilke⁹ Saturday,
That Nicholas still in his chamber lay,
And ate, and slept, and didde what him list
Till Sunday, that the sunne went to rest.¹⁰
This silly carpenter had great marvel¹¹
Of Nicholas, or what thing might him ail,
And said; "I am adrad,¹² by Saint Thomas!
It standeth not aright with Nicholas:
God shield¹³ that he died suddenly.
This world is now full tickle¹⁴ sickerly.¹⁵
I saw to-day a corpe y-borne to church,
That now on Monday last I saw him wirch.¹⁶
"Go up," quod he unto his knave,¹⁷ "anon;
Clepe¹⁸ at his door, or knock with a stone:

1 Pariah-clerks, like Absolon, had leading parts in the mysteries or religious plays; Herod was one of these parts, which may have been an object of competition among the amateurs of the period.

2 "May go whistle." 3 Jest.

4 The cunning one near at hand oft makes the loving one afar off to be odious.

5 Devise a stratagem.

7 Knew.

8 Believed.

9 That.

10 Till Sunday evening.

11 Wondered greatly.

12 Afraid, in dread.

13 Heaven forefend!

14 Ticklish, fickle, uncertain.

15 Surely.

16 Work.

17 Servant.

18 Call.

19 Where.

20 Looked; "keek" is still used in some parts in the sense of "peep."

21 Same.

22 To bless, cross himself.

23 Saint Frideswide, the patroness of a considerable priory at Oxford, and held there in high repute.

Look how it is, and tell me boldly."
This knave went him up full sturdily,
And, at the chamber door while that he stood,
He cried and knocked as that he were wood:²⁴
"What how? what do ye, Master Nicholas?
How may ye sleepen all the long day?"
But all for nought, he heard not a word.
An hole he found full low upon the board,
There as²⁵ the cat was wont in for to creep,
And at that hole he looked in full deep,
And at the last he had of him a sight.
This Nicholas sat ever gaping upright,
As he had kyked²⁶ on the new moon.
Adown he went, and told his master soon,
In what array he saw this ilk²⁷ man.

This carpenter to blissen him²⁸ began,
And said: "Now help us, Sainte Frideswide.²⁹
A man wot³⁰ little what shall him betide.
This man is fall'n with his astronomy
Into some woodness³¹ or some agony.
I thought aye well how that it should be.
Men should know nought of Godde's privy.³²
Yea, blessed be alway a lewed³³ man,
That nought but only his believ can.³⁴
So far'd another clerk with astronomy:
He walked in the fieldes for to pry
Upon³⁵ the starrs, what there should befall,
Till he was in a marle pit y-fall.³⁶
He saw not that. But yet, by Saint Thomas!
Me rueth sore of³⁷ Hendy Nicholas:
He shall be rated of his studying,³⁸
If that I may, by Jesus, heaven's king!
Get me a staff, that I may underspore³⁹
While that thou, Robin, heavest off the door:
He shall out of his studying, as I guess."
And to the chamber door he gan him dress.⁴⁰
His knave was a strong carl for the nonce,
And by the hasp⁴¹ he heaved it off at once;
Into the floor the door fell down anon.
This Nicholas sat aye as still as stone,
And ever he gap'd upward into the air.
The carpenter ween'd⁴² he were in despair,
And hent⁴³ him by the shoulders mightily,
And shook him hard, and cried spiteously;⁴⁴
"What, Nicholas? what how, man? look adown:
Awake, and think on Christe's passioun.
I crouch thee⁴⁵ from elvès, and from wights."⁴⁶
Therewith the night-spell said he anon rights,⁴⁷
On the four halvès⁴⁸ of the house about,
And on the threshold of the door without.
"Lord Jesus Christ, and Sainte Benedight,
Blessè this house from every wicked wight,

24 Knows.

25 Madness.

26 Secret counsel.

27 Unlearned.

28 Knows no more than his "credo."

29 Watch, keep watch on.

30 Till he fell into a marl-pit. Plato, in his "Theatetus," tells this story of Thales; but it has since appeared in many other forms.

31 I am very sorry for.

32 Chidden, rated, for his devotion to study.

33 Heave up the door by a lever beneath.

34 Apply himself.

35 Lock; from the Anglo-Saxon, "hepsian," to look, fasten; German, "Herpe."

36 Thought.

37 Caught.

38 Angrily.

39 Protect thee, by signing the sign of the Cross.

40 Witches, who were not of the feminine gender only.

41 In due form.

42 Corners, parts.

From the night mare, the white Pater-noster ;
Where wonnest¹ thou now, Saint² Peter's sister ?"
And at the last this Hendy Nicholas
Gan for to sigh full sore, and said ; " Alas !
Shall all the world be lost eftsoons³ now ?"
This carpenter answer'd ; " What sayest thou ?
What ? think on God, as we do, men that
swink."⁴

This Nicholas answer'd ; " Fetch me a drink ;
And after will I speak in privacy
Of certain thing that toucheth thee and me :
I will tell it no other man certain."

This carpenter went down, and came again,
And brought of mighty ale a largē quart ;
And when that each of them had drunk his part,
This Nicholas his chamber door fast shet,⁵
And down the carpenter by him he set,
And said ; " John, mine host full lief⁶ and
dear,

Thou shalt upon thy truthē swear me here,
That to no wight thou shalt my counsel wray :⁷
For it is Christ's counsel that I say,
And if thou tell it man, thou art forlore :⁸
For this vengeance thou shalt have therefor,
That if thou wray⁹ me, thou shalt be wood."¹⁰
" Nay, Christ forbid it for his holy blood !"
Quoth then this silly man ; " I am no blab,¹¹
Nor, though I say it, am I lief to gab.¹²
Say what thou wilt, I shall it never tell
To child or wife, by him that harried Hell."¹³

" Now, John," quoth Nicholas, " I will not lie ;
I have y-found in my astrology,
As I have looked in the moonē bright,
That now on Monday next, at quarter night,
Shall fall a rain, and that so wild and wood,¹⁴
That never half so great was Noë's flood.
This world," he said, " in lees than half an hour
Shall all be dreint,¹⁵ so hideous is the shower :
Thus shall mankindē drench,¹⁶ and lose their
life."

This carpenter answer'd ; " Alas, my wife !
And shall she drench ? alas, mine Alisoun !"
For sorrow of this he fell almost adown,
And said ; " Is there no remedy in this case ?"
" Why, yes, for God," quoth Hendy Nicholas ;
" If thou wilt worken after lore and rede ;¹⁷
Thou may'st not worken after thine own head.
For thou saith Solomon, that was full true :
Work all by counsel, and thou shalt not rue.¹⁸
And if thou workē wilt by good counsell,
I undertake, withoutē mast or sail,
Yet shall I savē her, and thee, and me.
Hast thou not heard how saved was Noë,
When that our Lord had warnē him beforē,
That all the world with water should be lorn ?"¹⁹

" Yes," quoth this carpenter, " full yore ago."²⁰
" Hast thou not heard," quoth Nicholas, " also
The sorrow of Noë, with his fellowshipp,
That he had ere he got his wife to ship ?²¹
Him had been lever,²² I dare well undertake,
At thilkē²³ time, than all his wethers black,
That she had had a ship herself alone.
And therefore know'st thou what is best to be
done ?

This asketh haste, and of an hasty thing
Men may not preach or makē tarrying.
Anon go get us fast into this inn²⁴
A kneading trough, or else a kemelin,²⁵
For each of us ; but look that they be large,
In whichē we may swim as in a barge :
And have therein vitallē sufficient
But for one day ; fie on the remenant ;
The water shall aslake²⁶ and go away
Aboutē prime²⁷ upon the nextē day.
But Robin may not know of this, thy knave,²⁸
Nor eke thy maiden Gill I may not save :
Ask me not why : for though thou askē me
I will not tellē Goddē's privy.
Sufficeth thee, but if thy wit be mad,²⁹
To have as great a grace as Noë had ;
Thy wife shall I well saven out of doubt.
Go now thy way, and speed thee hereabout.
But when thou hast for her, and thee, and me,
Y-gotten us these kneading tubbēs thre,
Then shalt thou hang them in the roof full high,
So that no man our purveyance³⁰ espy :
And when thou hast done thus as I have said,
And hast our vitaille fair in them y-laid,
And eke an axe to smite the cord in two
When that the water comes, that we may go,
And break an hole on high upon the gable
Into the garden-ward, over the stable,
That we may freely passē forth our way,
When that the greatē shower is gone away.
Then shalt thou swim as merry, I undertake,
As doth the whitē duck after her drake :
Then will I clepe,³¹ " How, Alison ? how, John ?
Be merry : for the flood will pass anon."
And thou wilt say, " Hail, Master Nicholay,
Good-morrow, I see thee well, for it is day."
And then shall we be lordēs all our life
Of all the world, as Noë and his wife.
But of one thing I warnē thee full right,
Be well advised, on that ilkē³² night,
When we be enter'd into shippē's board,
That none of us not speak a single word,
Nor clepe nor cry, but be in his prayere,
For that is Goddē's owen hestē³³ dear.
Thy wife and thou must hangen far atween,³⁴
For that betwixtē you shall be no sin,

forth and get him a new wife, because he was leaving
her gossips in the town to drown. Shem and his
brothers got her shipped by main force ; and Noah,
coming forward to welcome her, was greeted with a
box on the ear.

¹⁹ He would have given all his black wethers, if she
had had an ark to herself.

²⁰ That.

²¹ House.

²² Brewing-tub.

²³ Slacken, abate.

²⁴ Early forenoon.

²⁵ Servant.

²⁶ Unless thou be out of thy wits.

²⁷ Foresight, providence.

²⁸ Call out.

²⁹ Same.

³⁰ Command.

³¹ Asunder.

¹ Dwellest.

² Forthwith, immediately.

³ Labour.

⁴ Shut.

⁵ Loved.

⁶ Betray.

⁷ Lost ; German, " verloren."

⁸ Mad.

⁹ Talker.

¹⁰ Fond of prating.

¹¹ Wasted or subdued Hell : in the middle ages, some
very active exploits against the Prince of Darkness
and his powers were ascribed by the monkish tale-
tellers to the Saviour after He had " descended into
Hell."

¹² Drenched, drowned.

¹³ Drown.

¹⁴ Learning and counsel.

¹⁵ Repent.

¹⁶ Should perish.

¹⁷ Long since.

¹⁸ According to the old mysteries, Noah's wife re-
fused to come into the ark, and bade her husband row

No more in looking than there shall in deed.
This ordinance is said : go, God thee speed.
To-morrow night, when men be all asleep,
Into our kneading tubbës will we creep,
And sittë there, abiding Goddë's grace.
Go now thy way, I have no longer space
To make of this no longer sermoning :
Men say thus : Send the wise, and say nothing :
Thou art so wise, it needeth thee nought teach.
Go, save our lives, and that I thee beseech."

This silly carpenter went forth his way,
Full oft he said, "Alas ! and Well-a-day !"
And to his wife he told his privy,
And she was ware, and better knew than he
What all this quaintë cast was for to say.¹
But natheless she fear'd as she would dey,²
And said : "Alas ! go forth thy way anon.
Help us to scape, or we be dead each one.
I am thy true and very wedded wife ;
Go, dearë spouse, and help to save our life."
Lo, what a great thing is affection !
Men may die of imaginatiön,
So deeply may impressiön be take.
This silly carpenter begins to quake :
He thinketh verily that he may see
This newë flood come weltering as the sea
To drenchen³ Alison, his honey dear.
He weepeth, waileth, maketh sorry cheer ;⁴
He sigheth, with full many a sorry sough.⁵
He go'th, and getteth him a kneading trough,
And after that a tub, and a kemelin,
And privily he sent them to his inn :
And hung them in the roof full privily.
With his own hand then made he ladders three,
To climbë by the ranges and the stalks⁶
Unto the tubbës hanging in the balks ;⁷
And victualed them, kemelin, trough, and tub,
With bread and cheese, and good ale in a jub,⁸
Sufficing right enough as for a day.
But ere that he had made all this array,
He sent his knave, and eke his wench⁹ also,
Upon his need¹⁰ to London for to go.
And on the Monday, when it drew to night,
He shut his door withoutë candle light,
And dressed¹¹ every thing as it should be.
And shortly up they climbed all the three.
They sattë stillë well a furlong way.¹²
"Now, *Pater noster*, clum,"¹³ said Nicholay,
And "clum," quoth John ; and "clum," said
Alison :

This carpenter said his devotiön,
And still he sat and bidded his prayère,
Awaiting on the rain, if he it hear.
The deadë sleep, for weary business,

Fell on this carpenter, right as I guess,
About the curfew-time,¹⁴ or little more,
For travail of his ghost¹⁵ he groaned sore,
And eft he routed, for his head mislay.¹⁶
Adown the ladder stalked Nicholay ;
And Alison full soft adown she spod.
Withoutë wordës more they went to bed,
There as¹⁷ the carpenter was wont to lie :
There was the revel, and the melody.
And thus lay Alison and Nicholas,
In business of mirth and in solace,
Until the bell of *laudes*¹⁸ gan to ring,
And friars in the chancel went to sing.
This pariah clerk, this amorous Absolon,
That is for love always so weebegone,
Upon the Monday was at Oseney
With company, him to disport and play ;
And asked upon cas¹⁹ a cloisterer²⁰
Full privily after John the carpenter ;
And he drew him apart out of the church,
And said, "I n'ot ;²¹ I saw him not here
wirch²²

Since Saturday ; I trow that he be went
For timber, where our abbot hath him sent.
For he is wont for timber for to go,
And dwellen at the Grange a day or two :
Or else he is at his own house certain.
Where that he be, I cannot soothly sayn."²³
This Absolon full jolly was and light,
And thought, "Now is the time to wake all
night,
For sicklerly²⁴ I saw him not stirring
About his door, since day began to spring.
So may I thrive, but I shall at cock crow
Full privily go knock at his windöw,
That stands full low upon his bower wall :²⁵
To Alison then will I tellen all
My lovë-longing ; for I shall not miss
That at the leastë way I shall her kiss.
Some manner comfort shall I have, parfay,²⁶
My mouth hath itched all this livelong day :
That is a sign of kissing at the least.
All night I mette²⁷ eke I was at a feast.
Therefore I will go sleep an hour or tway,
And all the night then will I wake and play."
When that the first cock crowed had, anon
Up rose this jolly lover Absolon,
And him arrayed gay, at point devise.²⁸
But first he chewed grains²⁹ and liquorice,
To smellë sweet, ere he had combed his hair.
Under his tongue a truë love³⁰ he bare,
For thereby thought he to be gracious.
Then came he to the carpentër's house,
And still he stood under the shot window ;

extingnish fire and candle, and go to rest ; hence the
word curfew, from French, "*couvre-feu*," cover-fire.
¹⁴ Spirit. ¹⁵ Then he snored, for his head lay awry.
¹⁶ Where.
¹⁷ Matins, or morning song, at three in the morning.
¹⁸ Occasion. ¹⁹ Cloistered monk.
²⁰ Know not. ²¹ Work.
²² Say certainly. ²³ Sure enough.
²⁴ Chamber wall ; the window, it has been said, projected from the door. ²⁵ By my faith.
²⁶ Dreamt. ²⁷ With exact care.
²⁸ Grains of Paris, or Paradisc ; a favourite spice.
²⁹ Some sweet herb : another reading, however, is "a true love-knot," which may have been of the nature of a charm.

1 What all the strange contrivance meant.

2 Pretended to fear that she would die.

3 Drown.

4 A dismal countenance.

5 Groaning.

6 Rungs and uprights, or sides.

7 Beams, joists.

8 Jug, bottle.

9 His servant and serving-maid.

10 Business.

11 Prepared.

12 As long as it might take to walk a furlong.

13 "Clum," like "mum," a note of silence ; but otherwise explained as the humming sound made in repeating prayers ; from the Anglo-Saxon, "*clumian*," to mutter, speak in an under-tone, keep silence.

14 Eight in the evening, when, by the law of William the Conqueror, all people were, on ringing of a bell, to

Unto his breast it raught,¹ it was so low;
And soft he coughed with a semisoun.²

"What do ye, honeycomb, sweet Alisoún?

My fairē bird, my sweet cinamomé,³

Awaken, leman⁴ mine, and speak to me.

Full little thinkē ye upon my woe,

That for your love I sweat there as⁵ I go.

No wonder is that I do sweat⁶ and sweat.

I mourn as doth a lamb after the teat.

Y-wis,⁷ leman, I have such love-longing,

That like a turtle true is my mourning.

I may not eat, no morē than a maid."

"Go from the window, thou jack fool," she said:

"As help me God, it will not be, come ba me.⁸

I love another, else I were to blamē,

Well better than thee, by Jesus, Absolon.

Go forth thy way, or I will cast a stone;

And let me sleep; a twenty devil way."⁹

"Alas!" quoth Absolon, "and well away!

That true love ever was so ill beset:

Then kiss me, since that it may be no bet,¹⁰

For Jesus' love, and for the love of me."

"Wilt thou then go thy way therewith?" quoth she.

"Yea, certes, leman," quoth this Absolon.

"Then make thee ready," quoth she, "I come anon."

[And unto Nicholas she said full still: ¹¹

"Now peace, and thou shalt laugh anon thy fill."]

This Absolon down set him on his knees,

And said; "I am a lord at all degrees:

For after this I hope there cometh more;

Leman, thy grace, and, sweetē bird, thine ore."¹²

The window she undid, and that in haste.

"Have done," quoth she, "come off, and speed thee fast,

Lest that our neighbours should thee espy."

Then Absolon gan wipe his mouth full dry.

Dark was the night as pitch or as the coal,

And at the window she put out her hole,

And Absolon him fell ne bet ne worse,¹³

But with his mouth he kiss'd her naked erse

Full savourly. When he was ware of this,

Aback he start, and thought it was amiss,

For well he wist a woman hath no beard.

He felt a thing all rough, and long y-hair'd,

And said; "Fy, alas! what have I do?"

"Te he!" quoth she, and clapt the window to;

And Absolon went forth at sorry pace.

"A beard, a beard," said Hendy Nicholas;

¹ Reached.

² Low tone. ³ Cinnamon.

⁴ Mistress.

⁵ Wherever.

⁶ Faint, swelter; hence "sultry."

⁷ Certainly. ⁸ Come ba, or kiss, me.

⁹ Twenty devils fly away with thee! ¹⁰ Better.

¹¹ In a low voice. The two lines within brackets are not in most of the editions: they are taken from Urry; whether he supplied them or not, they serve the purpose of a necessary explanation. ¹² Favour.

¹³ Neither better nor worse befell.

¹⁴ Every word. ¹⁵ Requite, pay off, be even with.

¹⁶ Rubbuth; French, "frotter." ¹⁷ Rather.

¹⁸ Revenged; from "wreak," "awreak."

¹⁹ Deceived, befooled. ²⁰ Quenched.

²¹ Cared not a rush: "kera" is the modern "cross."

²² Master.

"By God's corpus, this game went fair and well."

This silly Absolon heard every deal,¹⁴

And on his lip he gan for anger bite;

And to himself he said, "I shall thee quite.¹⁵

Who rubbeth now, who frotteth¹⁶ now his lips

With dust, with sand, with straw, with cloth, with chips,

But Absolon? that saith full oft, "Alas!

My soul betake I unto Sathanas,

But me were lever¹⁷ than all this town," quoth he,

"Of this despite awroken¹⁸ for to be.

Alas! alas! that I have been y-blent."¹⁹

His hotē love is cold, and all y-quent.²⁰

For from that time that he had kiss'd her erse,

Of paramours he settē not a kera,²¹

For he was healed of his malady;

Full oft paramours he gan defy,

And weep as doth a child that hath been beat.

A softē pace he went over the street

Unto a smith, men callen Dan²² Gerveis,

That in his forgē smithed plough-harness;

He sharped share and culter busily.

This Absolon knocked all easily,

And said; "Undo, Gerveis, and that anon."

"What, who art thou?" "It is I, Absolon."

"What? Absolon, what? Christ's sweetē tree,²³

Why rise so rath?²⁴ hey! benedicite,

What ailleth you? some gay girl,²⁵ God it wote,

Hath brought you thus upon the virētote:²⁶

By Saint Neot, ye wot well what I mean."

This Absolon he raughtē²⁷ not a bean

Of all his play; no word again he gaf,²⁸

For he had morē tow on his distaff²⁹

Than Gerveis knew, and saidē; "Friend so dear,

That hotē culter in the chimney here

Lend it to me, I have therewith to don:³⁰

I will it bring again to thee full soon."

Gerveis answered; "Certes, were it gold,

Or in a pokē³¹ nobles all untold,

Thou shouldst it have, as I am a true smith.

Hey! Christ's foot, what will ye do therewith?"

"Thereof," quoth Absolon, "be as be may;

I shall well tell it thee another day:"

And caught the culter by the coldē stēle.³²

Full soft out at the door he gan to steal,

And went unto the carpentēr's wall.

He coughed first, and knocked therewithal

Upon the window, right as he did ere.³³

²³ Cross.

²⁴ Early.

²⁵ As applied to a young woman of light manners, this euphemistic phrase has enjoyed a wonderful vitality.

²⁶ Urry reads "meritote," and explains it from Spelman as a game in which children made themselves giddy by whirling on ropes. In French, "virer" means to turn; and the explanation may, therefore, suit either reading. In modern slang parlance, Gerveis would probably have said, "on the rampage," or "on the swing"—not very far from Spelman's rendering.

²⁷ Recked, cared.

²⁸ Gave.

²⁹ A proverbial saying: he was playing a deeper game, had more serious business on hand.

³⁰ Something to do.

³¹ Bag.

³² Handle.

³³ Before; again, "er."

This Alison answered; "Who is there
That knocketh so? I warrant him a thief."
"Nay, nay," quoth he, "God wot, my sweet¹
lefe,¹
I am thine Absolon, my own darling.
Of gold," quoth he, "I have thee brought a
ring,
My mother gave it me, so God me save!
Full fine it is, and thereto well y-grave:²
This will I give to thee, if thou me kiss.³
Now Nicholas was risen up to piss,
And thought he would amenden all the jape;³
He should⁴ kiss his erse ere that he scape:
And up the window did he hastily,
And out his erse he put full privily
Over the buttock, to the haunch⁵ bone.
And therewith spake this clerk, this Absolon,
"Speak, sweet⁶ bird, I know not where thou
art."

This Nicholas anon let fly a fart,
As great as it had been a thunder dent,⁴
That with the stroke he was well nigh y-blent;⁵
But he was ready with his iron hot,
And Nicholas amid the erse he smote.
Off went the skin an handbreadth all about.
The hot⁶ culter burned so his tout,⁶
That for the smart he weened⁷ he would die;
As he were wood,⁸ for woe he gan to cry,
"Help! water, water, help for Godd⁹'s heart!"
This carpenter out of his slumber start,
And heard one cry "Water," as he were wood,⁸
And thought, "Alas! now cometh No⁹'s flood."
He sat him up without¹⁰ word¹⁰es mo',
And with his axe he smote the cord in two;
And down went all; he found neither to sell
Nor bread nor ale,⁹ till he came to the sell,¹⁰
Upon the floor, and there in swoon he lay.
Up started Alison and Nicholas,
And cried out an "harow!"¹¹ in the street.
The neighbours all¹², both¹² small and great
In rann¹², for to gauren¹² on this man,
That yet in swoon¹² lay, both pale and wan:
For with the fall he broken had his arm.
But stand he must unto his owen harm,
For when he spake, he was anon borne down
With Hendy Nicholas and Aliso¹³un.
They told to every man that he was wood;⁸
He was aghast¹³ so of No⁹'s flood,
Through phantasy, that of his vanity
He had y-bought him kneading-tubb¹⁴es three,
And had them hanged in the roof above;
And that he prayed them for Godd⁹'s love
To sitten in the roof for company.
The folk gan laughen at his phantasy.
Into the roof they kyken,¹⁴ and they gape,
And turned all his harm into a jape.¹⁵

¹ Dear, love. ² Engraved. ³ Improve the jest.

⁴ Peel, clap. ⁵ Blinded. ⁶ Breech.

⁷ Thought. ⁸ Mad.

⁹ Found nothing to stop him.

¹⁰ Bill of the door, threshold; French, "seuil,"

Latin, "solum," the ground.

¹¹ See note 3, page 49.

¹² Stare. ¹³ Terrified.

¹⁴ Peep, look. ¹⁵ Jest. ¹⁶ Dear.

¹⁷ Enjoyed. ¹⁸ Care. ¹⁹ Company.

²⁰ Were diverted. ²¹ Left. ²² Murmur.

²³ Little.

For whatso'er this carpenter answer'd,
It was for nought, no man his reason heard.
With oathes great he was so sworn adown,
That he was holden wood in all the town.
For every clerk anon right held with other;
They said, "The man was wood, my lev¹⁶
brother;"
And every wight gan laughen at his strife.
Thus swived¹⁷ was the carpent¹⁸'s wife,
For all his keeping¹⁸ and his jealousy;
And Absolon hath kiss'd her nether eye;
And Nicholas is scalded in the tout.
This tale is done, and God save all the rout.¹⁹

THE REEVE'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.

WHEN folk had laughed all at this nice case
Of Absolon and Hendy Nicholas,
Divers²⁴ folk diversely they said,
But for the more²⁵ part they laugh'd and play'd;²⁶
And at this tale, I saw no man him grieve,
But it were only Os²⁷wold the Reeve.
Because he was of carpent²⁸'s craft,
A little ire is in his heart²⁹ left;²¹
He gan to grudge²² and blamed it a lite.²³
"So the I,"²⁴ quoth he, "full well could I him
quite²⁵
With blearing²⁶ of a proud²⁷ miller's eye,
If that me list to speak of ribaldry.
But I am old; me list not play for age;²⁷
Grass time is done, my fodder is now forage.
This whit²⁸ top²⁸ writeth mine old²⁹ years;
Mine heart is also moulded³⁰ as mine hairs;
And I do fare as doth an open-erse;³⁰
That ilk³¹ fruit is ever longer werse,
Till it be rotten in mullok or in stre.³²
We old³³ men, I dread, so far³⁴ we;
Till we be rotten, can we not be ripe;
We hop³⁵ alway, while that the world will pipe;
For in our will there sticketh aye a nail,
To have an hoary head and a green tail,
As hath a leek; for though our might be gone,
Our will desireth folly ever-in-one:³⁴
For when we may not do, then will we speak,
Yet in our ashes cold does fir³⁶ reek.³⁶
Four gled³⁷es³⁷ have we, which I shall devise,³⁷
Vaunting, and lying, anger, covetise.³⁸
These four³⁹ sparks belongen unto eld.
Our old⁴⁰ limb⁴⁰es well may be unweld,³⁹
But will shall never fail us, that is sooth.
And yet have I alway a colt⁴¹'s tooth.⁴⁰
As many a year as it is passed and gone

²⁴ Or "so the ik," so may I thrive.

²⁵ Match, recompense.

²⁶ Dimming his eye; playing off a joke on him.

²⁷ Age takes away my zest for drollery. ²⁸ Head.

²⁹ Grown mouldy. ³⁰ Medlar. ³¹ Same.

³² On the ground or in the straw. ³³ Dance.

³⁴ Continually.

³⁵ Smoke. "Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted
fires."

³⁶ Glowing coals (of passion). ³⁷ Relate, describe.

³⁸ Covetousness. ³⁹ Unwieldy.

⁴⁰ A wanton humour, a relish for pleasure.

Since that my tap of life began to run ;
For sicklerly,¹ when I was born, anon
Death drew the tap of life, and let it gon :
And ever since hath so the tap y-run,
Till that almost all empty is the tun.
The stream of life now droppeth on the
chimb.²

The silly tonguē well may ring and chime
Of wretchedness, that passed is full yore :³
With oldē folk, save dotage, is no more."⁴

When that our Host had heard this sermon-
ing,

He gan to speak as lordly as a king,
And said ; "To what amounteth all this wit ?
What ? shall we speak all day of holy writ ?
The devil made a Reeve for to preach,
As of a souter⁵ a shipman, or a leach.⁶
Say forth thy tale, and tarry not the time :
Lo here is Deptford, and 't is half past prime :⁷
Lo Greenwich, where many a shrew is in.
It were high time thy talē to begin."

"Now, sirs," quoth then this Osēwold the
Reeve,

"I pray you all that none of you do grieve,
Though I answer, and somewhat set his hove,⁸
For lawful is force off with force to shove.⁹
This drunken miller hath y-told us here
How that beguiled was a carpentēre,
Paraventure in soorn,—for I am one :
And, by your leave, I shall him quite anon.
Right in his churlish termēs will I speak,—
I pray to God his neckē might to-break.
He can well in mine eyē see a stalk,¹⁰
But in his own he cannot see a balk."

THE TALE.¹¹

At Trompington, not far from Cantebrig,¹²
There goes a brook, and over that a brig,
Upon the whichē brook there stands a mill :
And this is very sooth that I you tell.
A miller was there dwelling many a day,
As any peacock he was proud and gay :
Pipen he could, and fish, and nettēs bete,¹³
And turnē cups, and wrestle well, and shete.¹⁴
Aye by his belt he bare a long pavade,¹⁵
And of his sword full trenchant was the blade.
A jolly popper¹⁶ bare he in his pouch ;
There was no man for peril durst him touch.
A Sheffield whittle bare he in his hose.

¹ Certainly.

² The rim of the barrel where the staves project beyond the head. ³ Long.

⁴ Dotage is all that is left them ; that is, they can only dwell fondly, dote, on the past.

⁵ Cobbler ; Scottish, "sutor ;" from Latin, "suere," to sew.

⁶ Surgeon. "Ex suture medicus" and "ex suture naucerus"—seaman or pilot—were both proverbial expressions in the Middle Ages.

⁷ Half-way between prime and tierce ; about half-past seven in the morning.

⁸ Like "set their caps ;" see note 21, page 23. "Hove" or "houfe," means "hood ;" and the phrase signifies to be even with, outwit.

⁹ To repel force by force.

¹⁰ The illustration of the mote and the beam, from Matthew.

¹¹ The incidents of this tale were much relished in

Round was his face, and camuse¹⁷ was his nose.

As pilled¹⁸ as an apē's was his skull.
He was a market-beter at the full.¹⁹
There durstē no wight hand upon him legge,²⁰
That he ne swore anon he should abegge.²¹

A thief he was, for sooth, of corn and meal,
And that a sly, and used well to steal.
His name was hoten deinous Simekin.²²
A wife he haddē, come of noble kin :
The parson of the town her father was.
With her he gave full many a pan of brass,
For that Simkin should in his blood ally.

She was y-foster'd in a nunnery :
For Simkin wouldē no wife, as he said,
But she were well y-nourish'd, and a maid,
To save his estate and yeomanry :
And she was proud, and pert as is a pie.²³
A full fair sight it was to see them two ;
On holy days before her would he go
With his tippēt²⁴ y-bound about his head ;
And she came after in a gite²⁵ of red,
And Simkin haddē hosen of the same.

There durstē no wight call her aught but Dame :
None was so hardy, walking by that way,
That with her either durstē rage or play,²⁶
But if²⁷ he would be slain by Simekin
With pavade, or with knife, or bodēkin.

For jealous folk be pe'f'ous evermo' :
Algato²⁸ they would their wivēs wondē so.²⁹
And eke for she was somewhat smutterlich,³⁰
She was as dign³¹ as water in a ditch,
And all so full of hoker,³² and bismare.³³
Her thoughtē that a lady should her spare,³⁴
What for her kindred, and her nortelrio³⁵
That she had learned in the nunnery.

One daughter haddē they betwixt them two
Of twenty year, withouten any mo,
Saving a child that was of half year age,
In cradle it lay, and was a proper page.³⁶
This wenchē thick and well y-grown was,
With camuse nose, and eyen gray as glas ;
With buttocks broad, and breastē round and
high ;

But right fair was her hair, I will not lie.
The parson of the town, for she was fair,³⁷
In purpose was to make of her his heir
Both of his chattels and his messuage,
And strange he made it of³⁸ her marriage.
His purpose was for to bestow her high
Into some worthy blood of ancestry.

the Middle Ages, and are found under various forms. Boccaccio has told them in the ninth day of his "Decameron." ¹⁸ Cambridge. ¹⁹ Prepare.

¹⁴ Shoot.

¹⁵ Poniard.

¹⁷ Flat ; French, "camus," snub-nose.

¹⁸ Peeled, bald.

¹⁹ A brawler, bully, in full or open market.

²⁰ Lay.

²¹ Suffer the penalty.

²² Called "Disdainful Simkin," or little Simon.

²³ Magpie.

²⁴ Hood, or head-gear.

²⁵ Gown or coat ; French, "jupe."

²⁶ Use freedom.

²⁷ Unless.

²⁸ So behave themselves.

²⁹ Nasty ; akin to "dung."

³⁰ Scandal, abusive speech.

³¹ Should not judge her hardly.

³² Nurturing, education.

³³ Because of her beauty.

³⁴ He made it matter of consequence or difficulty.

³⁵ Always.

³⁶ Dirty.

³⁷ Ill-nature.

³⁸ Boy.

For holy Church's good may be dispended¹
On holy Church's blood that is descended.
Therefore he would his holy blood honour,
Though that he holy Church should devour.

Great soken² hath this miller, out of doubt,
With wheat and malt, of all the land about;
And namely³ there was a great collége
Men call the Soler Hall at Cantebroge,⁴
There was their wheat and eke their malt
y-ground.

And on a day it happed in a stound,⁵
Sick lay the manciple⁶ of a malady,
Men weened wisly⁷ that he should die.
For which this miller stole both meal and corn
An hundred times more than befor.
For theretofore he stole but courteously,
But now he was a thief outrageously.
For which the warden chid and madé fare,⁸
But therof set the miller not a tare;⁹
He crack'd his boast,¹⁰ and swore it was not
so.

Then were there youngé pooré scholars two,
That dwelled in the hall of which I say;
Testif¹¹ they were, and lusty for to play;
And only for their mirth and revelry
Upon the warden busily they cry,
To give them leave for but a little stound,¹²
To go to mill, and see their corn y-ground:
And hardily¹³ they dursté lay their neck,
The miller should not steal them half a peck
Of corn by sleight, nor them by force bereave.¹⁴
And at the last the warden give them leave:
John hight the one, and Alein hight the other,
Of one town were they born, that highté
Strother.¹⁵

Far in the North, I cannot tell you where.
This Alein he made ready all his gear,
And on a horse the sack he cast anon:
Forth went Alein the clerk, and also John,
With good sword and with buckler by their
side.

John knew the way, him needed not no guide,
And at the mill the sack adown he lay'th.

Alein spake first; "All hail, Simón, in faith,
How fares thy fairé daughter, and thy wife?"
"Alein, welcome," quoth Simkin, "by my life,
And John also: how now, what do ye here?"
"By God, Simón," quoth John, "need has no
peer."¹⁶

Him serve himself behoves that has no swain,¹⁷
Or else he is a fool, as clerkés sayn.
Our manciple I hope¹⁸ he will be dead,
So workés aye the wangés¹⁹ in his head:
And therefore is I come, and eke Alein,

¹ Spent. ² Toll taken for grinding; custom.

³ Especially.

⁴ The hall or college at Cambridge with the gallery
or upper storey; supposed to have been Clare Hall.

⁵ Suddenly.

⁶ Steward; provisioner of the hall.

⁷ Thought certainly.

⁸ Ado.

⁹ Cared the miller not a rush.

¹⁰ Talked big.

¹¹ Headstrong, wild-brained; French, "entêté."

¹² Short time.

¹³ Boldly.

¹⁴ Take away.

¹⁵ Tyrwhitt points to Anstruther, in Fife: Mr Wright
to the Vale of Langstroth, in the West Riding of York-
shire. Chaucer has given the scholars a dialect that
may have belonged to either district, although it more
immediately suggests the more northern of the two.

¹⁶ Equal.

¹⁷ Servant.

¹⁸ Expect.

To grind our corn and carry it home again:
I pray you speed us hence as well ye may."
"It shall be done," quoth Simkin, "by my say.
What will ye do while that it is in hand?"
"By God, right by the hopper will I stand,"
Quoth John, "and see how that the corn goes
in.

Yet saw I never, by my father's kin,
How that the hopper waggés to and fro."
Alein answered, "John, and wilt thou so?
Then will I be beneathé, by my crown,
And see how that the mealé falls adown
Into the trough, that shall be my disport:²⁰
For, John, in faith I may be of your sort;
I is as ill a miller as is ye."

This miller smiled at their nicéty,²¹
And thought, "All this is done but for a wile.
They weenen²² that no man may them beguile,
But by my thrift yet shali I bear their eye,²³
For all the sleight in their philosophy.
The more quainté knackés²⁴ that they make,
The more will I steal when that I take.

Instead of flour yet will I give them bren.²⁵
The greatest clerks are not the wisest men,
As whilom to the wolf thus spake the mare:²⁶
Of all their art ne count I not a tare."
Out at the door he went full privily,
When that he saw his timé, softly.
He looked up and down, until he found
The clerkés' horse, there as he stood y-bound
Behind the mill, under a levesell:²⁷
And to the horse he went him fair and well,
And stripped off the bridle right anon.
And when the horse was loose, he gan to gon
Toward the fen, where wildé marés run,
Forth, with "Wohee!" through thick and eke
through thin.

This miller went again, no word he said,
But did his note,²⁸ and with these clerkés
play'd.²⁹

Till that their corn was fair and well y-ground.
And when the meal was sacked and y-bound,
Then John went out, and found his horse away,
And gan to cry, "Harow, and well-away!
Our horse is lost: Alein, for Godd's bones,
Step on thy feet; come off, man, all at once:
Alas! our warden has his palfrey lorn."³⁰
This Alein all forgot, both meal and corn;
All was out of his mind his husbandry:³¹
"What, which way is he gone?" he gan to
cry.

The wifo came leaping inward at a renne,³²
She said; "Alas! your horse went to the fen
With wildé marés, as fast as he could go.

¹⁹ Grinders, cheek-teeth; Anglo-Saxon, "wang," the
cheek; German, "Wango."

²⁰ Amusement.

²¹ Think.

²² Odd little tricks.

²³ In the "Cento Novelle Antiche," the story is told
of a mule, which pretends that his name is written on
the bottom of his hind foot. The wolf attempts to
read it, the mule kills him with a kick in the forehead;
and the fox, looking on, remarks that "every man of
letters is not wise." A similar story is told in "Rey-
nard the Fox."

²⁴ An arbour; Anglo-Saxon, "lefe-setl," leafy seat.

²⁵ Business; German, "Noth," necessity.

²⁶ Lost. ²⁷ Careful watch over the corn. ²⁸ Jest.

²⁹ Jest.

³⁰ Jest.

³¹ Jest.

³² Jest.

Unthank¹ come on his hand that bound him so,
And his that better should have knit the rein."
"Alas!" quoth John, "Alein, for Christ's pain
Lay down thy sword, and I shall mine also.
I is full wight,² God wate,³ as is a roe.
By Godd's soul he shall not scape us bathe.⁴
Why n' had thou put the capel⁵ in the lathe?⁶
Ill hail, Alein, by God thou is a fonne."⁷
These silly clerk's have full fast y-run
Toward the fen, both Alein and eke John;
And when the miller saw that they were gone,
He half a bushel of their flour did take,
And bade his wife go knead it in a cake.
He said; "I trow, the clerk's were afraid,
Yet can a miller make a clerk's beard,⁸
For all his art: yea, let them go their way!
Lo where they go! yea, let the children play:
They get him not so lightly, by my crown."
These silly clerk's runnen up and down
With "Keep, keep; stand, stand; jossa,⁹
warderere.

Go whistle thou, and I shall keep¹⁰ him here."
But shortly, till that it was very night
They could'st not, though they did all their
might,

Their capel catch, he ran alway so fast:
Till in a ditch they caught him at the last.

Wearry and wet, as beast's in the rain,
Comes silly John, and with him comes Alein.
"Alas," quoth John, "the day that I was born!
Now are we driv'n till hething¹¹ and till scorn.
Our corn is stol'n, men will us fonn's⁷ call,
Both the wardén, and eke our fellows all,
And namely¹² the miller, well-away!"
Thus plained John, as he went by the way
Toward the mill, and Bayard¹³ in his hand.
The miller sitting by the fire he fand.¹⁴
For it was night, and forther¹⁵ might they
not,

But for the love of God they him besought
Of herberow and casé,¹⁶ for their penny.¹⁷
The miller said again, "If there be any,
Such as it is, yet shall ye have your part.
Mine house is strait, but ye have learned art;
Ye can by arguments maken a place
A mill broad, of twenty foot of space.
Let see now if this placé may suffice,
Or make it room with speech, as is your guise."¹⁸
"Now, Simon," said this John, "by Saint
Cuthbord

Aye is thou merry, and that is fair answer'd.
I have heard say, man shall take of two things,
Such as he find's, or such as he brings.

1 Ill luck, a curse. 2 Swift.
3 Knows. 4 Both; Scottish, "bath."
5 Horse; French, "cheval;" Italian, "cavallo,"
from Latin, "cavallus." 6 Barn. 7 Fool.
8 Chest a scholar; French, "faire la barbe;" and
Boccaccio uses the proverb in the same sense.
9 Turn. 10 Catch, intercept; Scottish, "kep."
11 Mockery. 12 Especially.
13 The bay horse. 14 Found.
15 Proceed on their way.
16 Lodging and entertainment.
17 Payment.
18 Fashion.
19 "Gar" is Scotch for "cause;" some editions read,
however, "get us some." 20 Allure.
21 Blankets, coverlets, made at Chalons.
22 Slide by slide. 23 Roomier lodging.

But specially I pray thee, hosté dear,
Gar¹⁹ us have meat and drink, and make us
cheer,

And we shall pay thee truly at the full:
With empty hand men may not hawk's tull.²⁰
Lo here our silver ready for to spend."

This miller to the town his daughter send
For ale and bread, and roasted them a goose,
And bound their horse, he should no more go
loose:

And them in his own chamber made a bed.
With sheet's and with chalons²¹ fair y-spread,
Not from his owen bed ten foot or twelve:
His daughter had a bed all by herself,
Right in the samé chamber by and by.²²
It might no better be, and causé why,—
There was no roomer herberow²³ in the place.
They suppen, and they speaken of solaco,
And drinken ever strong ale at the best.
Abouté midnight went they all to rest.
Well had this miller varnished his head;
Full pale he was, fordrunken, and nought red.²⁴
He yoxed,²⁵ and he spake thorough the nose,
As he were in the quakke,²⁶ or in the pose.²⁷
To bed he went, and with him went his wife,
As any jay she light was and jolife,²⁸
So was her jolly whistle well y-wet.
The cradle at her bedd's feet was set,
To rock, and eke to give the child to suck.
And when that drunken was all in the crock²⁹
To bedd's went the daughter right anon,
To bedd's went Alein, and also John.
There was no moré; needed them no dwale.³⁰
This miller had so wialy³¹ bibbed ale,
That as a horse he snorted in his sleep,
Nor of his tail behind he took no keep.³²
His wife bare him a burdoun,³³ a full strong;
Men might their routing³⁴ hearen a furlong.
The wench's routed eke for company.

Alein the clerk, that heard this melody,
He poked John, and said: "Sleepest thou?
Hearest thou ever such a song ere now?
Lo what a compline³⁵ is y-mell³⁶ them all.
A wild's fire upon their bodies fall,
Who hearken'd ever such a ferly³⁷ thing?
Yea, they shall have the flow'r of ill ending!
This long's night there tid's³⁸ me no rest.
But yet no force,³⁹ all shall be for the best.
For, John," said he, "as ever may I thrive,
If that I may, yon wench's will I swive.⁴⁰
Some easment has law y-shapen⁴¹ us.
For, John, there is a law that sayeth thus,
That if a man in one point be aggriev'd,

24 Drunk, and without his wits about him.
25 Hiccaped.
26 Inarticulate sound accompanying bodily exertion.
27 Catarrh. 28 Jolly.
29 Pitcher, cruse; Anglo-Saxon, "crocca;" Germane
"Krug;" hence "crockery."
30 Night-shade, *solanum somniferum*, given to cans,
sleep. 31 Certainly. 32 Heed.
33 Bass; "burden" of a song. It originally means the
drone of a bagpipe; French, "bourdon." 34 Snoring.
35 Even-song in the Church service; chorus.
36 Among.
37 Strange. In Scotland, a "ferlie" is an unwonted
or remarkable sight. 38 Comes to me.
39 Matter. 40 Enjoy carnally.
41 Some satisfaction, pleasure, has law provided.

That in another he shall be reliev'd.
Our corn is stol'n, soothly it is no nay,
And we have had an evil fit to-day.
And since I shall have none amendement
Against my loss, I will have easement:
By Goddē's soul, it shall none other be."
This John answer'd; "Alein, avise thee:¹
The miller is a perilous man," he said,
"And if that he out of his sleep abraid,²
He might do us both a villainy."³
Alein answer'd; "I count him not a fly."
And up he rose, and by the wench he crept.
This wench lay upright, and fast she slept,
Till he so nigh was, ere she might espy,
That it had been too late for to cry:
And, shortly for to say, they were at one.
Now play, Alein, for I will speak of John.
This John lay still a furlong way or two,⁴
And to himself he madē ruth⁵ and woe.
"Alas!" quoth he, "this is a wicked jape;⁶
Now may I say, that I is but an ape.
Yet has my fellow somewhat for his harm;
He has the miller's daughter in his arm:
He aunted⁷ him, and hath his needēs sped,
And I lie as a draff-sack in my bed;
And when this jape is told another day,
I shall be held a daffe⁸ or a cockenay:⁹
I will arise, and aunte it, by my fay:
Unhardy is unseely,¹⁰ as men say."
And up he rose, and softly he went
Unto the cradle, and in his hand it hent,¹¹
And bare it soft unto his beddē's feet.
Soon after this the wife her routing lete,¹²
And gan awake, and went her out to piss,
And came again, and gan the cradle miss,
And groped here and there, but she found none.
"Alas!" quoth she, "I had almost misgone,
I had almost gone to the clerk's bed.
Ey! *benedicite*, then had I foul y-sped."
And forth she went, till she the cradle fand.
She groped alway farther with her hand,
And found the bed, and thoughtē not but good,¹³
Because that the cradle by it stood,
And wist not where she was, for it was derk;
But fair and well she crept in by the clerk,
And lay full still, and would have caught a sleep.
Within a while this John the clerk up leap,
And on this goodū wife laid on full sore;
So merry a fit had she not had full yore.¹⁴
He pricked hard and deep, as he were mad.
This jolly life have these two clerkēs had,
Till that the thirde cock began to sing.
Alein wax'd weary in the morrowng,
For he had swonken¹⁵ all the longē night,
And saidē; "Farewell, Malkin, my sweet wight.
The day is come, I may no longer bide,
But evermore, where so I go or ride,

¹ Have a care. ² Awaked. ³ Mischief.
⁴ See note 12, page 52. ⁵ Wall.
⁶ Trick, befooling. ⁷ Adventured.
⁸ A coward, blockhead.
⁹ A term of contempt, probably borrowed from the kitchen; a cook, in base Latin, being termed "coquinarus." Compare French "coquin," rascal.
¹⁰ The cowardly is unlucky; "nothing venture, nothing have;" German, "unseelig," unhappy.
¹¹ Took. ¹² Left off. ¹³ Had no suspicion.
¹⁴ Long. ¹⁵ Labourd. ¹⁶ Health.

I is thine owen clerk, so have I hele."¹⁶
"Now, dearē leman,"¹⁷ quoth she, "go, fare-
wede:

But ere thou go, one thing I will thee tell.
When that thou wendest homeward by the mill,
Right at the entry of the door behind
Thou shalt a cake of half a bushel find,
That was y-maked of thine owen meal,
Which that I help'd my father for to steal.
And, goodē leman, God thee save and keep."
And with that word she gan almost to weep.
Alein uprose and thought, "Ere the day daw
I will go creepen in by my fellow's."
And found the cradle with his hand anon.
"By God!" thought he, "all wrong I have
misgone:

My head is totty of my swink¹⁸ to-night,
That maketh me that I go not aright.
I wot well by the cradle I have misgo';
Here lie the miller and his wife also."
And forth he went a twenty devil way
Unto the bed, there as the miller lay.
He ween'd¹⁹ t' have creeped by his fellow John,
And by the miller in he crept anon,
And caught him by the neck, and gan him shake,
And said; "Thou John, thou swinē's-head,
awake

For Christē's soul, and hear a noble game!
For by that lord that called is Saint Jame,
As I have thrice in this shortē night
Swived the miller's daughter bolt-upright,
While thou hast as a coward lain aghast."²⁰

"Thou falsē harlot," quoth the miller, "hast?
Ah, falsē traitor, falsē clerk," quoth he,
"Thou shalt be dead, by Goddē's dignity,
Who durstē be so bold to disparage²¹
My daughter, that is come of such lineage?"
And by the throat-ball²² he caught Alein,
And he him hent²³ dispiteously²⁴ again,
And on the nose he smote him with his fist;
Down ran the bloody stream upon his breast:
And in the floor with nose and mouth all broke
They wallow, as do two pigs in a poke.
And up they go, and down again anon,
Till that the miller spurned²⁵ on a stone,
And down he backward fell upon his wife,
That wistē nothing of this nicē strife:
For she was fall'n asleep a little wight²⁶
With John the clerk, that waked had all night:
And with the fall out of her sleep she braid.²⁷
"Help, holy cross of Bromēholm,"²⁸ she said;
"In manus tuas / Lord, to thee I call.
Awake, Simōn, the fiend is on me fall;
Mine heart is broken; help; I am but dead:
There li' th one on my womb and on mine head.
Help, Simkin, for these falsē clerks do fight."
This John start up as fast as e'er he might,

¹⁷ Sweetheart; the word was used of either sex.
¹⁸ Giddy, tottering, with my hard work.
¹⁹ Thought. ²⁰ Afraid.
²¹ Disgrace, do indignity to.
²² The protuberance in the throat, called "Adam's apple."
²³ Seized. ²⁴ Angriely.
²⁵ Stumbled. ²⁶ While. ²⁷ Woke.
²⁸ A common adjuration at that time; the cross or rod of the priory of Bromholm, in Norfolk, was said to contain part of the real cross, and therefore held in high esteem.

And groped by the wallës to and fro
To find a staff; and she start up also,
And knew the estres¹ better than this John,
And by the wall she took a staff anon:
And saw a little shimmering of a light,
For at an hole in shone the moon's bright,
And by that light she saw them both the two,
But sicklerly² she wist not who was who,
But as she saw a white thing in her eye.
And when she gan this white thing espy,
She ween'd³ the clerk had wear'd a volupere;⁴
And with the staff she drew aye nere and nere,⁵
And ween'd to have hit this Alein at the full,
And smote the miller on the pilled⁶ skull,
That down he went, and cried, "Harow! I die."
These clerks beat him well, and let him lie,
And greithen⁷ them, and take their horse anon,
And eke their meal, and on their way they gon:
And at the mill door eke they took their cake
Of half a bushel flour, full well y-bake.

Thus is the proude miller well y-beat,
And hath y-lost the grinding of the wheat,
And payed for the supper every deal⁸
Of Alein and of John, that beat him well;
His wife is swived, and his daughter als;⁹
Lo, such it is a miller to be false.
And therefore this proverb is said full sooth,
"Him thar¹⁰ not winnen¹¹ well that evil do'th;
A guiler shall himself beguiled be:"
And God that sitteth high in majesty
Save all this company, both great and smale.
Thus have I quit¹² the Miller in my tale.

THE COOK'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.

THE Cook of London, while the Reeve thus spake,
For joy he laugh'd and clapp'd him on the back:
"Aha!" quoth he, "for Christ's passiõn,
This Miller had a sharp conclusiõn,
Upon this argument of herbergeage.¹³
Well said Solomon in his language,
Bring thou not every man into thine house,
For harbouring by night is perilous.
Well ought a man avised for to be¹⁴
Whom that he brought into his privy.
I pray to God to give me sorrow and care
If ever, since I hight¹⁵ Hodge of Ware,
Heard I a miller better set a-werk;¹⁶
He had a jape¹⁷ of malice in the derk.
But God forbid that we should stinte¹⁸ here,
And therefore if ye will vouchsafe to hear

A tale of me, that am a poor man,
I will you tell as well as e'er I can
A little jape that fell in our city."

Our Host answer'd and said; "I grant it thee.
Roger, tell on; and look that it be good,
For many a pesty hast thou letten blood,
And many a Jack of Dover¹⁹ hast thou sold,
That had been twis hot and twis cold.
Of many a pilgrim hast thou Christ's curse,
For of thy parsley yet fare they the worse,
That they have eaten in thy stubble goose:
For in thy shop doth many a fly go loose.
Now tell on, gentle Roger, by thy name,
But yet I pray thee be not wroth for game;²⁰
A man may say full sooth in game and play."
"Thou sayst full sooth," quoth Roger, "by my
fay;
But sooth play quad play,²¹ as the Fleming saith,
And therefore, Harry Bailly, by thy faith,
Be thou not wroth, else we depart²² here,
Though that my tale be of an hostelere.²³
But natheless, I will not tell it yet,
But ere we part, y-wis²⁴ thou shalt be quit."
And therewithal he laugh'd and mad cheer,²⁵
And told his tale, as ye shall after hear.

THE TALE.

A prentice whilom dwelt in our city,
And of a craft of victuallers was he:
Gaillard²⁶ he was, as goldfinch in the shaw,²⁷
Brown as a berry, a proper short fellow:
With lockes black, combed full fetialy.²⁸
And dance he could so well and jollily,
That he was called Perkin Revellour.
He was as full of love and paramour,
As is the honeycomb of honey sweet;
Well was the wench that with him might meet.
At every bridal would he sing and hop;
He better lov'd the tavern than the shop.
For when there any riding was in Cheap,²⁹
Out of the shopp thither would he leap,
And, till that he had all the sight y-seen,
And danced well, he would not come again;
And gather'd him a meinie of his sort.³⁰
To hop and sing, and mak such disport:
And there they sett steven³¹ for to meet
To playen at the dice in such a street.
For in the town was there no prentice
That fairer could cast a pair of dice
Than Perkin could; and thereto he was free
Of his dispence, in place of privy.³²
That found his master well in his chaffare,³³
For oftentime he found his box full bare.

1 Apartment. 2 Certainly.
3 Supposed. 4 Night-cap.
5 Nearer and nearer. 6 Bald.
7 Make ready, dress. 8 Every bit. 9 Also.
10 It behoves; from the Anglo-Saxon, "theorlian," to be obliged. 11 Gain; obtain good.
12 Made myself quits with, paid off.
13 Lodging. 14 A man should take good heed.
15 Since my name was. 16 Better handled.
17 Trick. 18 Stop. 19 An article of cookery.
20 Be not angry with my jesting.
21 True jest no jest. 22 Else we part company.
23 Innkeeper.

24 Assuredly. It may be remembered that each pilgrim was bound to tell two stories; one on the way to Canterbury, the other returning.
25 French, "à bonne mine;" put on a pleasant countenance.
26 Shade, grove. 27 Daintily.
28 Cheapside, where fairs were sometimes held, and which was the great scene of city revels and processions. 29 Company of fellows like himself.
30 Made appointment.
31 And, moreover, he spent money liberally in places where he could do so without being observed.
32 Ware, merchandise.

For, soothely, a prentice reuelour,
That haunteth dice, riot, and paramour,
His master shall it in his shop abie,¹
All² have he no part of the minstrelsy.
For theft and riot they be convertible,
All³ can they play on gitern or ribible.³
Revel and truth, as in a low degree,
They be full wroth⁴ all day, as men may see.

This jolly prentice with his master bode,
Till he was nigh out of his prenticehood,
All⁵ were he snubbed⁵ both early and late,
And sometimes led with revel to Newgate.
But at the last his master him bethought,
Upon a day when he his paper⁶ sought,
Of a proverb, that saith this samē word;
Better is rotten apple out of hoard,
Than that it should rot all the remenant:
So fares it by a riotous servant;
It is well less⁷ harm to let him pace,⁷
Than he shend⁸ all the servants in the place.
Therefore his master gave him a quittance,
And bade him go, with sorrow and mischance.
And thus this jolly prentice had his leve:⁹
Now let him riot all the night, or leave.¹⁰

And, for there is no thief without a louke,¹¹
That helpeth him to wasten and to souk¹²
Of that he bribē can, or borrow may,
Anon he sent his bed and his array
Unto a comper¹³ of his owen sort,
That loved dice, and riot, and disport;
And had a wife, that held for countenance¹⁴
A shop, and swived¹⁵ for her sustenance.

16

THE MAN OF LAW'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.

OUR Host¹ saw well that the bright² sun
Th' arc of his artificial day had run
The fourth³ part, and half an hour⁴ more;
And, though he were not deep expert in lore,
He wist it was the eight-and-twenty day
Of April, that is messenger to May;
And saw well that the shadow of every tree
Was in its length of the same quantity
That was the body croct that caused it;
And therefore by the shadow he took his wit,¹⁷

¹ Suffer for. ² Although. ³ Giltar or rebeck.

⁴ At variance. ⁵ Rebuked.

⁶ Certificate of completed apprenticeship.

⁷ Pass, go.

⁸ Corrupt.

⁹ What he loved, his desire.

¹⁰ Refrain.

¹¹ The precise meaning of the word is unknown, but it is doubtless included in the cant term "pal."

¹² Suck, consume, spend.

¹³ Comrade.

¹⁴ For the sake of appearances.

¹⁵ Prostituted herself.

¹⁶ The Cook's Tale is unfinished in all the manuscripts; but in some, of minor authority, the Cook is made to break off his tale, because "it is so foul," and to tell the story of Gamelyn, on which Shakespeare's "As You Like It" is founded. The story is not Chaucer's, and is different in metre, and inferior in composition to the Tales. It is supposed that Chaucer expunged the Cook's Tale for the same reason that made him on his death-bed lament that he had written so much "ribaldry."

That Phoebus, which that shone so clear and bright,

Degrees was five-and-forty clomb on height;
And for that day, as in that latitude,
It was ten of the clock, he gan conclude;
And suddenly he plight¹⁸ his horse about.

"Lordings," quoth he, "I warn you all this rout."¹⁹

The fourth²⁰ partie of this day is gone.

Now for the love of God and of Saint John
Loosē no time, as farforth as ye may.

Lordings, the timē wasteth night and day,
And steals from us, what privily sleeping,
And what through negligence in our waking,
As doth the stream, that turneth never again,
Descending from the mountain to the plain.
Well might Senec, and many a philosopher,
Bewail²¹ timē more than gold in coffer.

For loss of chattels may recover²² be,
But loss of timē shendeth²³ us, quoth he.

It will not come again, without²⁴ dread,²⁴

No morē than will Malkin's maidenhead,²⁵

When she hath lost it in her wantonness.

Let us not mould²⁶ thus in idleness.

Sir Man of Law," quoth he, "so have ye bliss,

Tell us a tale anon, as forward is."²⁷

Ye be submitted through your free assent

To stand in this case at my judgement.

Acquit you now, and hold²⁸ your behest;²⁸

Then have ye done your devoir²⁹ at the least."

"Hostē," quoth he, "*de par dieux jeo as-
sente*;"³⁰

To break³¹ forward is not mine intent.

Behest is debt, and I would hold it fain,

All my behest; I can no better sayn.

For such law as a man gives another wight,

He should himselfe useen it by right.

Thus will our text: but natheless certain

I can right now no thrifty³² talē sayn,

But Chaucer (though he can but lowdly³³

On metres and on rhyming craftily)

Hath said them, in such English as he can,

Of oldē time, as knoweth many a man.

And if he have not said them, levē³⁴ brother,

In one book, he hath said them in another

For he hath told of lovers up and down,

More than Ovidē made of mentiou³⁵

In his Epistols, that be full old.

Why should I tell³⁶ them, since they be told?

In youth he made of Ceyx and Aleyon,³⁷

¹⁷ Knowledge.

¹⁸ Pulled; the word is an obsolete past tense from "pluck."

¹⁹ Company.

²⁰ Destroys.

²¹ Doubt.

²² A proverbial saying; which, however, had obtained fresh point from the Reeve's Tale, to which the Host doubtless refers.

²³ According to our bargain.

²⁴ Keep your promise.

²⁵ Duty.

²⁶ It is characteristic that the somewhat pompous Sergeant of Law should couch his assent in the scabrous French, then familiar in law procedure.

²⁷ Worthy.

²⁸ Understands but imperfectly.

²⁹ Dear.

³⁰ Made mention of.

³¹ In the introduction to the poem called "The Dream of Chaucer;" or, "The Book of the Duchesse." It relates to the death of Blanche, wife of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, the poet's patron, and afterwards his connexion by marriage.

And since then hath he spoke of every one
These noble wivës, and these lovers eke.
Whoso that will his largë volume seek
Called the Saintës' Legend of Cupid :¹
There may he see the largë woundës wide
Of Lucrece, and of Babylon Thisbé ;
The sword of Dido for the false Enée ;
The tree of Phillis for her Demophon ;
The plaint of Diane, and of Hermion,
Of Ariadne, and Hypsipilé ;
The barren isle standing in the sea ;
The drown'd Leander for his fair Heró ;
The tearës of Hélène, and eke the woe
Of Briseïs, and Laodamia ;
The cruelty of thee, Queen Medeë,
Thy little children hanging by the halse,²
For thy Jason, that was of love so false.
O Hypermnestra, Pénélop', Alcest',
Your wifehood he commendeth with the best.
But certainly no wordës writeth he
Of thilkë wick'³ example of Canacé,
That loved her own brother sinfully ;
(Of all such cursed stories I say, fy),
Or else of Tyrius Apollonius,
How that the cursed king Antiochus
Bereft his daughter of her maidenhead ;
That is so horrible a tale to read,
When he her threw upon the pavément.
And therefore he, of full aviëment,⁴
Would never write in none of his sermons
Of such unkind⁵ abominatiöns ;
Nor I will none rehearse, if that I may.
But of my tale how shall I do this day ?
Me were loth to be likend doubtlës
To Muses, that men call Pieridës⁶
(*Metamorphoseos*⁷ wot what I mean),
But natheless I rockë not a bean,
Though I come after him with hawëbake ;⁸
I speak in prose, and let him rhymës make."
And with that word, he with a sober cheer
Began his tale, and said as ye shall hear.

THE TALE.⁹

O scatheful harm, condition of povërty,
With thirst, with cold, with hunger so con-
founded,
To askë help thee shameth in thine heartë ;

If thou none ask, so sore art thou y-wounded,
That very need unwrappeth all thy wound hid.
Maugré thine head thou must for indigence
Or steal, or beg, or borrow thy dispence.¹⁰

Thou blamest Christ, and sayst full bitterly,
He misdeparteth¹¹ riches temporal ;
Thy neighbour thou witest¹² sinfully,
And sayst, thou hast too little, and he hath all :
" Parfay (sayst thou) sometime he reckon shall,
When that his tail shall brennen in the glode,¹³
For he not help'd the needful in their need."

Hearken what is the sentence of the wise :
Better to die than to have indigence.
Thy selvë neighbour¹⁴ will thee despise,
If thou be poor, farewell thy reverence.
Yet of the wisë man take this sentence,
Allë the days of poorë men be wick',¹⁵
Beware therefore ere thou come to that prick.¹⁶

If thou be poor, thy brother hateth thee,
And all thy friendës flee from thee, alas !
O richë merchants, full of wealth be ye,
O noble, prudent folk, as in this case,
Your baggës be not fill'd with ambës ace,¹⁷
But with six-cinque,¹⁸ that runneth for your
chance ;

At Christenmass well merry may ye dance.

Ye seekë land and sea for your winnings,
As wisë folk ye knowen all th' estate
Of regnës ;¹⁹ ye be fathers of tidings,
And talës, both of peace and of debate :²⁰
I were right now of talës desolate,²¹
But that a merchant, gone in many a year,
Me taught a tale, which ye shall after hear.

In Syria whilom dwelt a company
Of chapmen rich, and thereto sad²² and true,
That widëwherë²³ sent their spiciery,
Clothes of gold, and satins rich of hue.
Their chaffare²⁴ was so thriftily²⁵ and so new,
That every wight had dainty²⁶ to chaffare²⁷
With them, and eke to sellë them their ware.

Now fell it, that the masters of that sort
Have shapen them²⁸ to Romë for to wend,
Were it for chapmanhood²⁹ or for disport,
None other message would they thither send,
But come themselves to Rome, this is the end :
And in such place as thought them advantage
For their intent, they took their herbergeage.³⁰

Sojourned have these merchants in that town

¹ Now called "The Legend of Good Women." The names of eight ladies mentioned here are not in the "Legend" as it has come down to us; while those of two ladies in the "Legend"—Cleopatra and Philomela—are here omitted.

² Neck.

³ That wicked.

⁴ Deliberately, advisedly.

⁵ Unnatural.

⁶ Not the Muses, who had their surname from the place near Mount Olympus where the Thracians first worshipped them; but the nine daughters of Pierus, king of Macedonia, whom he called the nine Muses, and who, being conquered in a contest with the genuine sisterhood, were changed into birds.

⁷ Ovid's.

⁸ Hawback, country lout; the common proverbial phrase, "to put a rogue above a gentleman," may throw light on the reading here, which is difficult.

⁹ This Tale is believed by Tyrwhitt to have been taken, with no material change, from the "Confessio Amantis" of John Gower, who was contemporary with Chaucer, though somewhat his senior. In the prologue, the references to the stories of Canace, and of

Apollonius Tyrius, seem to be an attack on Gower, who had given those tales in his book; whence Tyrwhitt concludes that the friendship between the two poets suffered some interruption in the latter part of their lives. Gower was not the inventor of the story, which he found in old French romances; and it is not improbable that Chaucer may have gone to the same source as Gower, though the latter undoubtedly led the way.

¹⁰ Expense.

¹¹ Allots amiss.

¹² Blamest.

¹³ Burn in the fire.

¹⁴ That same neighbour of thine.

¹⁵ Wicked, evil.

¹⁶ Point.

¹⁷ Two aces.

¹⁸ Six-five.

¹⁹ Kingdoms.

²⁰ Contention, war.

²¹ Barren, empty.

²² Grave, steadfast.

²³ To distant parts.

²⁴ Wares.

²⁵ Cheap, advantageous.

²⁶ To "have dainty," is to take pleasure in or esteem a thing.

²⁷ Deal.

²⁸ Determined, prepared.

²⁹ Trading.

³⁰ Lodging.

A certain time, as fell to their plesance :
And so befell, that th' excellent renown
Of th' emperor's daughter, Dame Constance,
Reported was, with every circumstance,
Unto these Syrian merchants in such wise,
From day to day, as I shall you devise.¹

This was the common voice of every man :
"Our emperor of Romē, God him see,²
A daughter hath, that since the world began,
To reckon as well her goodness as beauty,
Was never such another as is she :
I pray to God in honour her sustene,
And would she were of all Eūrope the queen.

"In her is highē beauty without pride,
And youth withoutē greenhood³ or folly :
To all her workē's virtue is her guide ;
Humbleth hath slain in her all tyranny :
She is the mirror of all courtreye,
Her heart a very chamber of holiness,
Her hand minister of freedom for almshouse."⁴

And all this voice was sooth, as God is true ;
But now to purpose⁵ let us turn again.
These merchants have done freight⁶ their
shippes new,

And when they have this blissful maiden seen,
Homē to Syria then they went full fain,
And did their needēs,⁷ as they have done yore,⁸
And liv'd in weal ;⁹ I can you say no more.

Now fell it, that these merchants stood in
grace¹⁰

Of him that was the Soudan¹¹ of Syrie :
For when they came from any strangē place
He would of his benignē courtesy
Make them good cheer, and busily espy¹²
Tidings of sundry regnēs,¹³ for to lear¹⁴
The wonders that they mightē see or hear.

Amongēs other thingēs, specially
These merchants have him told of Dame Con-
stance¹⁵

So great nobles, in earnest so royally,
That this Soudan hath caught so great plesance
To have her figure in his remembrance,
That all his lust,¹⁶ and all his busy cure,¹⁶
Was for to love her while his life may dure.

Paraventure in thilkē¹⁷ largē book,
Which that men call the heaven, y-written was
With starres, when that he his birthē took,
That he for love should have his death, alas !
For in the starres, clearer than is glass,
Is written, God wot, whoso could it read,
The death of every man withoutē dread.¹⁸

In starres many a winter therebefore
Was writ the death of Hector, Achilles,
Of Pompey, Julius, ere they were born ;
The strife of Thebes ; and of Heroules,
Of Samson, Turnus, and of Socrates
The death ; but mennē's wittēs be so dull,
That no wight can well read it at the full.

This Soudan for his privy council sent,
And, shortly of this matter for to pace,¹⁹
He hath to them declared his intent,
And told them certain, but²⁰ he might have
grace

To have Constance, within a little space,
He was but dead ; and charged them in his²¹
To shapē²² for his life some remedy.

Diversē men diversē thingēs said ;
And arguments they casten up and down ;
Many a subtle reason forth they laid ;
They speak of magic, and abusōn ;²³
But finally, as in conclusōn,
They cannot see in that none advantage,
Nor in no other way, save marriage.

Then saw they therein such difficulty
By way of reason, for to speak all plain,
Because that there was such diversity
Between their bothē lawēs, that they sayn,
They trowē²⁴ that no Christian prince would
fain²⁵

Wedden his child under our lawē sweet,
That us was given by Mahound²⁶ our prophēte.

And he answered : "Rather than I lose
Constance, I will be christen'd doubtless :
I must be hers, I may none other choose,
I pray you hold your arguments in peace,²⁷
Savē my life, and be not reckless
To gettē her that hath my life in cure,²⁸
For in this woe I may not long endure."

What needeth greater dilatation ?
I say, by treaty and ambassadry,
And by the Pope's mediation,
And all the Church, and all the chivalry,
That in destruction of Mah'metry,²⁹
And in increase of Christ's lawē dear,
They be accorded³⁰ so as ye may hear ;

How that the Soudan, and his baronage,
And all his lieges, shall y-christen'd be,
And he shall have Constance in marriage,
And certain gold, I n'ot³¹ what quantity,
And hereto find they sufficient surety.
The same accord is sworn on either side ;
Now, fair Constance, Almighty God thee
guide !

Now wouldē some men waiten, as I guess,
That I should tellen all the purveyance,³²
The which the emperor of his nobles
Hath shapen³³ for his daughter, Dame Con-
stance.

Well may men know that so great ordinance
May no man tellen in a little clause,
As was arrayed for so high a cause.

Bishops be shapen³⁴ with her for to wend,³⁴
Lordēs, ladies, and knightēs of renown,
And other folk enough, this is the end.
And notified is throughout all the town,
That every wight with great devotiōn

¹ Relate. ³ Save ; look on with favour.

² Childishness, immaturity.

³ Liberality for deeds of charity.

⁴ To our discourse, tale ; French, "propos."

⁵ Caused to be laden. ⁷ Business.

⁶ Formerly. ⁹ Prosperity.

¹⁰ Favour. ¹¹ Sultan. ¹³ Inquire. ¹⁵ Realm.

¹⁴ Learn. ¹⁵ Pleasure. ¹⁶ Care.

¹⁷ That. ¹⁸ Doubt. ¹⁹ To pass briefly by.

²⁰ Unless. ²¹ Haste.

²² Deception, stratagem.

²³ Willingly.

²⁴ "Peace" rhymed with "lose" and "choose," the

old forms of "lose" and "choose."

²⁵ Mahometanism.

²⁶ Provision.

²⁷ Agreed.

²⁸ Prepared.

²⁹ Go.

³⁰ Conceive.

³¹ Believe.

³² Mahomet.

³³ Keeping.

³⁴ Know not.

Should pray to Christ, that he this marriage
Receive in gree,¹ and speed² this voyage.

The day is comen of her départing,—
I say the woful fatal day is come,
That there may be no longer tarrying,
But forward they them dressen³ all and some.
Constance, that was with sorrow all o'ercome,
Full pale arose, and dressed her to wend,
For well she saw there was no other end.

Alas! what wonder is it though she wept,
That shall be sent to a strange nation
From friend⁴s, that so tenderly her kept,
And to be bound under subjection
Of one, she knew not his condition?
Husbands be all good, and have been of yore,⁵
That know⁶ wiv⁷s; I dare say no more.

"Father," she said, "thy wretched child Con-
stance,

Thy young⁸ daughter, foster'd up so soft,
And you, my mother, my sov'reign pleasance
Over all thing, out-taken⁴ Christ on loft,⁹
Constance your child her recommendeth oft
Unto your grace; for I shall to Syrie,
Nor shall I ever see you more with eye.

"Alas! unto the barbarous nation
I must anon, since that it is your will;
But Christ, that star⁶ for our redemption,
So give me grace his hest⁷s to fulfil.
I, wretched woman, no force though I spill!¹⁰
Women are born to thralldom and penance,
And to be under mann⁸'s governance."

I trow at Troy when Pyrrhus brake the wall,
Or Ilion burnt, or Thebes the city,
Nor at Rome for the harm through Hannibal,
That Romans hath y-vanquish'd times three,
Was heard such tender weeping for pity,
As in the chamber was for her parting;
But forth she must, whether she weep or sing.

O first¹¹ moving cruel Firmament,⁸
With thy diurnal sway that crowdest¹⁰ aye,
And hurtlest all from East till Occident
That naturally would hold another way;
Thy crowding set the heav'n in such array
At the beginning of this fierce voyage,
That cruel Mars hath slain this marriage.

Unfortunate ascendant tortuous,
Of which the lord is helpless fall'n, alas!
Out of his angle into the darkest house.
O Mars, O Atyzar,¹¹ as in this case;
O feeble Moon, unhappy is thy pace.¹²
Thou knittest thee where thou art not receiv'd,¹³
Where thou wert well, from thenn⁸s art thou
weiv'd.¹⁴

Imprudent emperor of Rome, alas!

Was there no philosópher in all thy town?
Is no time bet¹⁵ than other in such case?
Of voyage is there none election,
Namely¹⁶ to folk of high condition,
Not when a root is of a birth y-know?¹⁷
Alas! we be too lew⁸d,¹⁸ or too slow.

To ship was brought this woful fair⁹ maid
Solemnly, with every circumstance:
"Now Jesus Christ be with you all," she said.
There is no more, but "Farewell, fair Constance."
She pained her¹⁹ to make good countenance.
And forth I let her sail in this mann⁸r,
And turn I will again to my matt⁸r.

The mother of the Soudan, wall of vices,
Espied hath her son⁸'s plain intent,
How he will leave his old⁸ sacrifices:
And right anon she for her council sent,
And they be come, to know⁸ what she meant,
And when assembled was this folk in fere,²⁰
She sat her down, and said as ye shall hear.

"Lord⁸s," she said, "ye knowen every one,
How that my son in point is for to lete²¹
The holy law⁸s of our Alkaron,²²
Given by God's messenger Mahométe:
But one avow to great⁸ God I hete,²³
Life shall rather out of my body start,
Than Mahomet's law go out of mine heart.

"What should us tiden²⁴ of this new⁸ law,
But thralldom to our bodies, and penance,
And afterward in hell to be y-draw,
For we renied Mahound our creance?²⁵
But, lord⁸s, will ye maken assurance,
As I shall say, assenting to my lore?²⁶
And I shall make us safe for evermore."

They sworn and assented every man
To live with her and die, and by her stand:
And every one, in the best wise he can,
To strengthen her shall all his friend⁸s fand.²⁷
And she hath this emprise taken in hand,
Which ye shall hear⁸ that I shall devise;²⁸
And to them all she spake right in this wise.

"We shall first feign us Christendom to take;²⁹
Cold water shall not grieve us but a lite;³⁰
And I shall such a feast and revel make,
That, as I trow, I shall the Soudan quite.³¹
For though his wife be christen'd ne'or so
white,

She shall have need to wash away the red,
Though she a fount of water with her led."

O Soudaness,³² root of iniquity,
Virago thou, Semiramis the second!
O serpent under femininity,
Like to the serpent deep in hell y-bound!
O feigned woman, all that may confound

¹ With good will, favour. ² Prepare to set out.

³ Of old. ⁴ Except. ⁵ On high. ⁶ Died.

⁷ Commands. ⁸ No matter though I perish.

⁹ According to Middle Age writers there were two motions of the first heaven; one moving everything always from east to west above the stars; the other moving the stars against the first motion, from west to east, on two other poles.

¹⁰ Pushest together, drivest.

¹¹ The meaning of this word is not known; but "coffer," murderer, has been suggested instead by Urry, on the authority of a marginal reading on a manuscript.

¹² Progress.

¹³ Thou joinest thyself where thou art rejected, and art declined or departed from the place where thou wert well. The Moon portends the fortunes of Constance.

¹⁴ Waived, declined.

¹⁵ Better.

¹⁶ Especially.

¹⁷ When the nativity is known.

¹⁸ Ignorant.

¹⁹ Made an effort.

²⁰ Together.

²¹ Forsake.

²² Koran.

²³ Promise.

²⁴ Betide, befall.

²⁵ For denying Mahomet our belief.

²⁶ Advice.

²⁷ Endeavour; from Anglo-Saxon, "fandian," to try.

²⁸ Relate.

²⁹ To embrace Christianity.

³⁰ Little.

³¹ Requite, match.

³² Sultaness.

Virtue and innocence, through thy malice,
Is bred in thee, as nest of every vice!

O Satan envious! since thilkē day
That thou wert chased from our heritage,
Well knowest thou to woman th' oldē way.
Thou madest Eve to bring us in servage:¹
Thou wilt fordo² this Christian marriage:
Thine instrument so (well-away the while!)
Mak'st thou of women when thou wilt beguile.

This Soudaness, whom I thus blamo and
warry,³

Let privily her counsel go their way:
Why should I in this talē longer tarry?
She rode unto the Soudan on a day,
And said him, that she would reny her lay,⁴
And Christendom of priestes' handēs fong,⁵
Repenting her she hoathen was so long;

Beseeching him to do her that honour,
That she might have the Christian folk to
feast:

"To please them I will do my labour."
The Soudan said, "I will do at your hest,"⁶
And kneeling, thanked her for that request;
So glad he was, he wist⁷ not what to say.
She kiss'd her son, and home she went her way.

Arrived be these Christian folk to land
In Syria, with a great solemnē rout,
And hastily this Soudan sent his sond,⁸
First to his mother, and all the realm about,
And said, his wife was comen out of doubt,
And pray'd them for to ride again⁹ the queen,
The honour of his regnē¹⁰ to sustene.

Great was the press, and rich was the array
Of Syrians and Romans met in fere.¹¹
The mother of the Soudan rich and gay
Received her with all so glad a cheer¹²
As any mother might her daughter dear:
And to the nextē city there beside
A softē pace solemnly they ride.

Nought, trow I, the triumph of Julius,
Of which that Lucan maketh such a boast,
Was royaller, or more curious,
Than was th' assembly of this blissful host:
But O this scorpion, this wicked ghost,¹³
The Soudaness, for all her flattering
Cast¹⁴ under this full mortally to sting.

The Soudan came himself soon after this,
So royally, that wonder is to tell,
And welcomed her with all joy and bliss.
And thus in mirth and joy I let them dwell.
The fruit of this mattē is that I tell;
When the time came, men thought it for the best
That revel stint,¹⁵ and men go to their rest.

The time is come that this old Soudaness
Ordained hath the feast of which I told,
And to the feast the Christian folk them dress
In general, yea, bothē young and old.

There may men feast and royalty behold,
And dainties more than I can you devise;
But all too dear they bought it ere they rise.

O sudden woe, that ev'r art successor
To worldly bliss! sprent¹⁶ is with bitterness
Th' end of our joy, of our worldly labour:
Woe occupiēs the fine¹⁷ of our gladness.
Hearken this counsel, for thy sickness: ¹⁸
Upon thy glādē days have in thy mind
The unware¹⁹ woe of harm, that comes behind.

For, shortly for to tell it at a word,
The Soudan and the Christians every one
Were all to-hewn and sticked at the board,²⁰
But it were only Dame Constance alone.
This oldē Soudaness, this cursed crone,
Had with her friendēs done this cursed deed,
For she herself would all the country lead.

Nor there was Syrian that was converted,
That of the counsel of the Soudan wot,²¹
That was not all to-hewn, ere he asterted:²²
And Constance have they taen anon foot-hot,²³
And in a ship all steerless,²⁴ God wot,
They have her set, and bid her learn to sail
Out of Syria again-ward to Itale.²⁵

A certain treasure that she thither lad,²⁶
And, sooth to say, of victual great plenty,
They have her giv'n, and clothēs eke she had,
And forth she sailed in the saltē sea:
O my Constance, full of benignity,
O emperor's youngē daughter dear,
He that is lord of fortune be thy steer!²⁷

She bless'd herself, and with full piteous
voice

Unto the cross of Christ thus saidē she;
"O dear, O wealful²⁸ altar, holy cross,
Red of the Lamb's blood, full of pity,
That wash'd the world from old iniquity,
Me from the fiend and from his clawēs keep,
That day that I shall drenchen²⁹ in the deep.

"Victorious tree, protection of the true,
That only worthy werē for to bear
The King of Heaven, with his woundēs now,
The whitē Lamb, that hurt was with a spear;
Flemer³⁰ of fiendēs out of him and her
On which thy limbēs faithfully extend,³¹
Me keep, and give me might my life to mend."

Yearēs and days floated this creature
Throughout the sea of Greece, unto the strait
Of Maroc,³² as it was her aventure:
On many a sorry meal now may she bait,
After her death full often may she wait,³³
Ere that the wildē waves will her drive
Unto the place there as³⁴ she shall arrive.

Men mighten askē, why she was not alain?
Eke at the feast who might her body save?
And I answer to that demand again,
Who saved Daniel in the horrible cave,

¹ Bondage. ³ Ruin. ³ Oppose, censure.
⁴ Renounce her creed, profession.
⁵ Take; Anglo-Saxon, "fengian;" German, "fangen."

⁶ Desire, command. ⁷ Knew. ⁸ Message.
⁹ To meet. ¹⁰ Realm. ¹¹ In company.
¹² Face. ¹³ Spirit. ¹⁴ Contrived. ¹⁵ Cease.
¹⁶ Sprinkled. ¹⁷ Seizes the end.
¹⁸ Security. ¹⁹ Unforeseen.

²⁰ Cut in pieces and stabbed at table. ²¹ Knew.
²² Escaped. ²³ Immediately, in haste.
²⁴ Without rudder. ²⁵ Back to Italy.
²⁶ Led, took. ²⁷ Rudder, guide.
²⁸ Blessed, beneficent. ²⁹ Banisher, driver out.
³⁰ Drown. ³¹ Out of those who in faith wear the crucifix.
³² Morocco; Gibraltar. ³³ Expect.
³⁴ Where.

Where every wight, save he, master or knave,¹
Was with the lion frett,² ere he astart?³
No wight but God, that he bare in his heart.

God list⁴ to shew his wonderful miracle
In her, that we should see his mighty workës :
Christ, which that is to every harm triacle,⁵
By certain meanës oft, as knowës clerkës,⁶
Doth thing for certain endë, that full derk is
To mannës wit, that for our ignorance
Ne cannot know his prudent purveyance.⁷

Now since she was not at the feast y-alaw,⁸
Who keptë her from drowning in the sea?
Who keptë Jonas in the fish's maw,
Till he was spouted up at Nineveh?
Well may men know, it was no wight but he
That kept the Hebrew people from drowning,
With dryë feet throughout the sea passing.

Who bade the fourë spirite of tempët,⁹
That power have t' annoyë land and sea,
Both north and south, and also west and east,
Annoyë neither sea, nor land, nor tree?
Soothly the cõmmander of that was he
That from the tempest aye this woman kept,
As well when she awoke as when she slept.

Where might this woman meat and drinkë
have?

Three year and more how lasted her vitaille?¹⁰
Who fed the Egyptian Mary in the cave
Or in desért? no wight but Christ *sans faille*.¹¹
Five thousand folk it was as great marvaille
With loavës five and fishës two to feed :
God sent his foison¹² at her greatë need.

She driven forth into our ocean
Throughout our wildë sea, till at the last
Under an hold,¹³ that nempnen¹⁴ I not can,
Far in Northumberland, the wave her cast,
And in the sand her ship stickek so fast,
That thennës would it not in all a tide :¹⁵
The will of Christ was that she should abide.

The Constable of the castle down did fare¹⁶
To see this wreck, and all the ship he
sought,¹⁷

And found this weary woman full of care ;
He found also the treasure that she brought :
In her languagë mercy she besought,
The life out of her body for to twin,¹⁸
Her to deliver of woe that she was in.

A manner Latin corrupt¹⁹ was her speech,
But algate²⁰ thereby was she understond.
The Constable, when him list no longer seech,²¹
This woeful woman brought he to the lond.
She kneeled down, and thankel Goddë's
sond ;²²

But what she was she would to no man say
For foul nor fair, although that she should
dey.²³

She said, she was so mazed in the sea,
That she forgot her mindë, by her truth.
The Constable had of her so great pity
And ake his wifë, that they wept for ruth :²⁴
She was so diligent withoutë slouth
To serve and please every one in that place,
That all her lov'd, that looked in her face.

The Constable and Dame Hermegild his wife
Were Pagans, and that country every where ;
But Hermegild lov'd Constance as her life ;
And Constance had so long sojourned there
In orisons, with many a bitter tear,
Till Jesus had converted through His grace
Dame Hermegild, Constablës of that place.

In all that land no Christians durstë rout ;²⁵
All Christian folk had fled from that country
Through Pagans, that conquered all about
The plagës²⁶ of the North by land and sea.
To Wales had fled the Christianity
Of oldë Britons,²⁷ dwelling in this ile ;
There was their refuge for the meanëwhile.
But yet n'ere²⁸ Christian Britons so exiled,
That there n'ere²⁹ some which in their privy
Honoured Christ, and heathen folk beguiled ;
And nigh the castle such there dwelled three :
And one of them was blind, and might not see,
But³⁰ it were with thilk³¹ eyen of his mind,
With which men mayë see when they be blind.

Bright was the sun, as in a summer's day,
For which the Constable, and his wife also,
And Constance, have y-take the rightë way
Toward the sea, a furlong way or two,
To playen, and to roamë to and fro ;
And in their walk this blindë man they met,
Crooked and old, with eyen fast y-shet.³²

"In the name of Christ," cried this blind
Briton,

"Dame Hermegild, give me my sight again !"
This lady wax'd afrayed of that soun',³³
Lest that her husband, shortly for to sayn,
Would her for Jesus Christë's love have alain,
Till Constance made her bold, and bade her
wrich³⁴

The will of Christ, as daughter of holy Church.

The Constable wax'd abashed³⁵ of that sight,
And saidë ; "What amounteth all this fare?"³⁶
Constance answered ; "Sir, it is Christ's might,
That helpeth folk out of the fiendë's snare :"
And so farforth³⁷ she gan our law declare,
That she the Constable, ore that it were eve,
Converted, and on Christ made him believe.

This Constable was not lord of the place
Of which I speak, there as he Constance fand,³⁸
But kept it strongly many a winter space,
Under Allä, king of Northumberland,
That was full wise, and worthy of his hand

¹ Servant.

² Escaped.

³ Treacle ; remedy, salve.

⁴ Foresight.

⁵ The four angels who held the four winds of the earth, and to whom it was given to vult the earth and the sea (Rev. vii. 1, 2).

⁶ Without fail.

⁷ Castle.

⁸ Thence would it not move for long, at all.

⁹ Go.

¹⁰ Searched.

¹¹ Devoured.

¹² It pleased.

¹³ Scholars.

¹⁴ Blain.

¹⁵ The four winds of the earth.

¹⁶ Victuals.

¹⁷ Abundance.

¹⁸ Name.

¹⁹ Divide.

²⁰ A kind of bastard Latin.

²¹ Nevertheless.

²² Thanked God for what He had sent.

²³ Die.

²⁴ Assemble.

²⁵ Such of the old Britons as were Christians.

²⁶ Were not.

²⁷ Closed, shut.

²⁸ Work.

²⁹ What means all this ado?

³⁰ So far, with such effect.

³¹ Search (in the ship).

³² He had sent.

³³ Pity.

³⁴ Regions, coasts.

³⁵ Thoes.

³⁶ Was alarmed by that cry.

³⁷ Astonished.

³⁸ Found.

Against the Scotts, as men may well hear ;
But turn I will again to my mattère.

Satan, that ever us waiteth to beguile,
Saw of Constance all her perfectioun,
And cast¹ anon how he might quite her while ;²
And made a young knight, that dwelt in that town,

Love her so hot of foul affectioun,
That verily him thought that he should spill³
But⁴ he of her might onés have his will.

He wooed her, but it availed nought ;
She woulds do no sinné by no way :
And for despite, he compassed his thought
To maké her a shameful death to dey ;⁵
He waiteth when the Constable is away,
And privily upon a night he crept
In Hermegild's chamber while she slept.

Weary, forwaked⁶ in her orisons,
Sleepeth Constance, and Hermegild also.
This knight, through Satanas' temptations,
All softly is to the bed y-go,⁷
And out the throat of Hermegild in two,
And laid the bloody knife by Dame Constance,
And went his way, there God give him mis-
chance.

Soon after came the Constable home again,
And eke Allá that king was of that land,
And saw his wife dispiteously⁸ alain,
For which full oft he wept and wrung his hand ;
And in the bed the bloody knife he fand
By Dame Constance : Alas ! what might she
say ?

For very woe her wit was all away.

To King Allá was told all this mischance,
And eke the time, and where, and in what wise,
That in a ship was founden this Constance,
As here before ye have me heard devise :⁹
The king's heart for pity gan agrise,¹⁰
When he saw so benign a creature
Fall in disease¹¹ and in misaventure.

For as the lamb toward his death is brought,
So stood this innocent before the king :
This falsé knight, that had this treason wrought,
Bore her in hand¹² that she had done this thing :
But natheless there was great murmuring
Among the people, that say they cannot guess
That she had done so great a wickedness.

For they had seen her ever virtuóus,
And loving Hermegild right as her life :
Of this bare witness eache one in that house,
Save he that Hermegild slew with his knife :
This gentle king had caught a great motife¹³
Of this witness, and thought he would in-
quere

Deeper into this case, the truth to lear.¹⁴
Alas ! Constance, thou has no champion,
Nor fighté canst thou not, so well-away !
But he that starf¹⁵ for our redemption,

And bound Satán, and yet li'th where he lay,¹⁶
So be thy strongé champion this day :
For, but Christ upon thee miracle kithé,¹⁷
Withouté guilt thou shalt be alain as swithe.¹⁸

She set her down on knees, and thus she said ;
" Immortal God, that savedest Susanne
From falsé blame ; and thou merciful maid,
Mary I mean, the daughter to Saint Anne,
Before whose child the angels sing Oanne,¹⁹
If I be guiltless of this felony,²⁰
My succour be, or ellés shall I die."

Have ye not seen sometime a palé face
(Among a press) of him that hath been lad²¹
Toward his death, where he getteth no grace,
And such a colour in his face hath had,
Men mighté know him that was so bested²²
Amongés all the faces in that rout ?
So stood Constance, and looked her about.

O queenés living in prosperity,
Duchesses, and ye ladies every one,
Have some ruth²³ on her adversity !
An emperor's daughter, she stood alone ;
She had no wight to whom to make her moan.
O blood royál, that standest in this drede,²⁴
Far be thy friendés in thy greaté need !

This king Allá had such compassioun,
As gentle heart is full filled of pity,
That from his eyen ran the water down.
" Now hastily do fetch a book," quoth he ;
" And if this knight will swearé, how that she
This woman slew, yet will we us advise²⁵
Whom that we will that shall be our justice."²⁶

A Briton book, written with Evangiles,²⁷
Was fetched, and on this book he swore anon
She guilty was ; and, in the meanwhiles,
An hand him smote upon the necké bone,
That down he fell at once right as a stone :
And both his eyen burst out of his face
In sight of ev'rybody in that place.

A voice was heard, in general audience,
That said ; " Thou hast deslander'd guiltless
The daughter of holy Church in high presence ;
Thus hast thou done, and yet hold I my
peace ?"²⁸

Of this marvel aghast was all the press,
As mazed folk they stood every one
For dread of wreaké,²⁹ save Constance alone.

Great was the dread and eke the repentance
Of them that haddé wrong suspicioun
Upon this sely³⁰ innocent Constance ;
And for this miracle, in conclusioun,
And by Constance's mediatioun,
The king, and many another in that place,
Converted was, thanked be Christ's grace !

This falsé knight was slain for his untruth
By judgement of Alla hastily ;
And yet Constance had of his death great ruth,³¹
And after this Jesus of his mercy

¹ Deliberated, contrived.

² Repay her labour, revenge himself on her.

³ Perish.

⁴ Unless.

⁵ Die.

⁶ Having been long awake.

⁷ Gone.

⁸ Cruelly.

⁹ Describe.

¹⁰ To be grieved, to tremble.

¹¹ Distress.

¹² Accused her falsely.

¹³ Been greatly moved by the evidence.

¹⁴ Learn.

¹⁵ Died.

¹⁶ That lieth yet where he was laid.

¹⁷ Show.

¹⁸ Immediately.

¹⁹ Hosanna.

²⁰ Cruelly, wickedness.

²¹ Led.

²² Bested, situated.

²³ Pity.

²⁴ Dread, danger.

²⁵ Consider.

²⁶ Judge.

²⁷ The Gospels.

²⁸ And shall I be silent ?

²⁹ Vengeance.

³⁰ Simple, harmless.

³¹ Compassion.

Made Alla weddē full solemnly
This holy woman, that is so bright and sheen,
And thus hath Christ y-made Constance a queen.

But who was woeful, if I shall not lie,
Of this wedding but Donegild, and no mo',
The king's mother, full of tyranny?
Her thought her cursed heart would burst in
two;

She would not that her son had donē so;
Her thought it a despite that he should take
So strange a creature unto his make.¹

Me list not of the chaff nor of the stre²
Makē so long a tale, as of the corn.
What should I tellen of the royalty
Of this marriage, or which course goes befor,
Who bloweth in a trump or in an horn?
The fruit of every tale is for to say;
They eat and drink, and dance, and sing, and
play.

They go to bed, as it was skill³ and right;
For though that wivēs be full holy things,
They mustē take in patience at night
Such manner⁴ necessities as be pleatings
To folk that have y-wedded them with rings,
And lay a lite⁵ their holiness aside
As for the time, it may no better betide.

On her he got a knavē⁶ child anon,
And to a Bishop and to his Constable eke
He took his wife to keep, when he is gone
To Scotland-ward, his foemen for to seek.
Now fair Constance, that is so humble and
meek,

So long is gone with childē till that still
She held her chamb'r, abiding Christō's will.

The time is come, a knavē child she bare;
Mauricius at the font-stone they him call.
This Constable doth forth come⁷ a messenger,
And wrote unto his king that clep'd was All',
How that this blissful tidings is befall,
And other tidings speedful for to say.
He⁸ hath the letter, and forth he go'th his
way.

This messenger, to do his āvantage,⁹
Unto the king's mother rideth swithe,¹⁰
And salueth¹¹ her full fair in his language.
"Madame," quoth he, "ye may be glad and
blithe,

And thankē God an hundred thousand sithē;¹²
My lady queen hath child, withoutē doubt,
To joy and bliss of all this realm about.

"Lo, here the letter sealed of this thing,
That I must bear with all the haste I may:
If ye will aught unto your son the king,
I am your servant both by night and day."
Donegild answer'd, "As now at this time, nay;
But here I will all night thou take thy rest,
To-morrow will I say thee what me lest."¹³

This messenger drank sadly¹⁴ ale and wine,

1 Mate, consort. 4 Kind of. 5 Little.
2 Reasonable. 6 Male; German, "Knabe," boy.
3 Caused to come forth. 7 The messenger.
8 Promote his own interest. 9 Swiftly.
10 Greet. 11 Times. 12 Pleases.
13 Steadily. 14 Bold, brave.
15 Had by ill-chance become an elf, a witch.

And stolen were his letters privily
Out of his box, while he slept as a swine;
And counterfeited was full subtilly
Another letter, wrote full sinfully,
Unto the king, direct of this mattēre
From his Constable, as ye shall after hear.

This letter said, the queen deliver'd was
Of so horrible a fiendlike creature,
That in the castle none so hardy¹⁵ was
That any while he durst therein endure:
The mother was an elf by āventure
Become,¹⁶ by charms or by sorcery,
And every man hated her company.

Woe was this king when he this letter had
seen,
But to no wight he told his sorrows sore,
But with his owen hand he wrote again;
"Welcome the sōnd¹⁷ of Christ for evermore
To me, that am now learned in this lore:¹⁸
Lord, welcome be thy lust¹⁹ and thy pleasance,
My lust I put all in thine ordinance.

"Keepē²⁰ this child, all be it foul or fair,
And eke my wife, unto mine homecoming:
Christ when him list may send to me an heir,
More agreeable than this to my liking."
This letter he sealed, privily weeping,
Which to the messenger was taken soon,
And forth he went, there is no more to do'n.²¹

O messenger full fill'd of drunkenness,
Strong is thy breath, thy limbēs falter aye,
And thou betrayest allē secretness;
Thy mind is lorn,²² thou janglest as a jay;
Thy face is turned in a new array;²³
Where drunkenness reigneth in any rout,²⁴
There is no counsel hid, withoutē doubt.

O Donegild, I have none English dign²⁵
Unto thy malice, and thy tyranny:
And therefore to the fiend I thee resign,
Let him indite of all thy treachery.
Fy, mannish,²⁶ fy! O nay, by God I lie;
Fy, fiendlike spirit! for I dare well tell,
Though thou here walk, thy spirit is in hell.

This messenger came from the king again,
And at the king's mother's court he light,²⁷
And she was of this messenger full fain,²⁸
And pleased him in all that e'er she might.
He drank, and well his girdle underpight;²⁹
He slept, and eke he snored in his guise
All night, until the sun began to rise.

Eft³⁰ were his letters stolen every one,
And counterfeited letters in this wise:
The king commanded his Constable anon,
On pain of hanging and of high Jewise,³¹
That he should suffer in no manner wise
Constance within his regne³² for to abide
Three dayēs, and a quarter of a tide;³³

But in the samē ship as he her fand,
Her and her youngē son, and all her gear,

17 The will, sending. 18 By his conversion.
19 Will, pleasure. 20 Preserve.
21 Do. 22 Lost. 23 Aspect.
24 Company. 25 Worthy.
26 Unwomanly woman. 27 Alighted. 28 Glad.
29 Packed, stuffed his belt, stowed away liquor under
his girdle. 30 Again. 31 Judgment, doom.
32 Kingdom. 33 A fourth of the time.

He should¹ put, and crowd¹ her from the land,
And charge her, that she never eft come there.
O my Constance, well may thy ghost² have fear,
And sleeping in thy dream be in penance,³
When Donegild cast⁴ all this ordinance.⁵

This messenger, on morrow when he woke,
Unto the castle held the next⁶ way,
And to the Constable the letter took;
And when he this dispiteous⁷ letter sey,⁸
Full oft he said, "Alas, and well-away!
Lord Christ," quoth he, "how may this world
endure?"

So full of sin is many a creature.

"O mighty God, if that it be thy will,
Since thou art rightful judge, how may it be
That thou wilt suffer innocence to spill,⁹
And wicked folk reign in prosperity?
Ah! good Constance, alas! so woe is me,
That I must be thy tormentor, or dey¹⁰
A shameful death, there is no other way."

Wept both¹¹ young and old in all that place,
When that the king this cursed letter sent;
And Constance, with a deadly pale face,
The fourth¹² day toward her ship she went:
But natheless she took in good intent
The will of Christ, and kneeling on the strand¹³
She said, "Lord, aye welcome be thy sond.¹⁴

"He that me kept¹⁵ from the false blame,
While I was in the land amonges you,
He can me keep from harm and eke from shame
In the salt sea, although I see not how:
As strong as ever he was, he is yet now,
In him trust I, and in his mother dear;
That is to me my sail and eke my sterc."¹⁶

Her little child lay weeping in her arm,
And, kneeling, piteously to him she said,
"Peace, little son, I will do thee no harm:"
With that her kerchief off her head she braid,¹⁷
And over his little eyen she it laid,
And in her arm she lulled it full fast,
And unto heav'n her eyen up she cast.

"Mother," quoth she, "and maiden bright,
Mary,

Sooth is, that through a woman's eggement¹⁸
Mankind was lorn,¹⁹ and damned aye to die;
For which thy child was on a cross y-rent:¹⁷
Thy blissful eyen saw all his torment,
Then is there no comparison between
Thy woe, and any woe man may sustene.

"Thou saw'st thy child y-slain before thine
eyen,

And yet now lives my little child, parfay:¹⁸
Now, lady bright, to whom the woeful cryen,
Thou glory of womanhood, thou fair¹⁹ may,¹⁹
Thou haven of refuge, bright star of day,
Rue²⁰ on my child, that of thy gentleness
Ruest on every rueful²¹ in distress.

¹ Push.

² Spirit.

³ Pain, trouble.

⁴ Contrived.

⁵ Plan, plot.

⁶ Nearest.

⁷ Cruel.

⁸ Saw.

⁹ Be destroyed.

¹⁰ Die.

¹¹ Strand, shore.

¹² Thy will; whatever Thou sendest.

¹³ Rudder; guide.

¹⁴ Took, drew.

¹⁵ Incitement, egging on.

¹⁶ Lost.

¹⁷ Torn, pierced.

¹⁸ By my faith.

¹⁹ Maid.

²⁰ Take pity. ²¹ Sorrowful. ²² Far Dieu; by God.

"O little child, alas! what is thy guilt,
That never wroughtest sin as yet, pardie?²³
Why will thine hard²⁴ father have thee spilt?²⁴
O mercy, dear²⁵ Constable," quoth she,
"And let my little child here dwell with thee:
And if thou dar'st not sav²⁶ him from blame,
So kiss him on²⁷ in his father's name."

Therewith she looked backward to the land,
And said, "Farewell, husband ruth²⁸less!"²⁸
And up she rose, and walked down the strand
Toward the ship, her following all the press:²⁹
And ever she pray'd her child to hold his peace,
And took her leave, and with an holy intent
She blessed her, and to the ship she went.

Victual³⁰ed was the ship, it is no drede,³¹
Abundantly for her a full long space:
And other necessities that should need³²
She had enough, heried³³ be Godd³⁴'s grace:
For wind and weather, Almighty God purchas³⁵,³⁵
And bring her home; I can no better say;
But in the sea she drove forth her way.

All³⁶ the king came home soon after this
Unto the castle, of the which I told,
And asked where his wife and his child is;
The Constable gan about his heart feel cold,
And plainly all the matter he him told
As ye have heard; I can tell it no better;
And shew'd the king his seal, and eke his letter

And said; "Lord, as ye commanded me
On pain of death, so have I done certain."
The messenger torment³⁷ed was, till he
Must³⁸ beknow³⁹, and tell it flat and plain,
From night to night in what place he had lain;
And thus, by wit and subtle inquiring,
Imagin'd was by whom this harm gan spring.

The hand was known that had the letter wrote,
And all the venom of the cursed deed;
But in what wise, certainly I know not.
Th' effect is this, that Alla, out of drede,³³
His mother slew, that may men plainly read,
For that she traitor was to her liegeance:³⁴
Thus ended old³⁵ Donegild with mischance.

The sorrow that this Alla night and day
Made for his wife, and for his child also,
There is no tongu³⁶ that it tell³⁷ may.
But now will I again to Constance go,
That floated in the sea in pain and woe
Five year and more, as liked Christ³⁸'s sond,³⁸
Ere that her ship approach³⁹ed to the lond.³⁹

Under an heathen castle, at the last,
Of which the name in my text I not find,
Constance and eke her child the sea upcast.
Almighty God, that saved all mankind,
Have on Constance and on her child some mind,
That fallen is in heathen hand eftsoon⁴⁰
In point to spill,⁴¹ as I shall tell you soon!

Down from the castle came there many a wight

²³ Cruel, stern.

²⁴ Destroyed.

²⁵ Pitiless.

²⁶ Multitude.

²⁷ Doubt.

²⁸ Be needed.

²⁹ Honoured, praised; from Anglo-Saxon, "herian."

Compare German, "herrlich," glorious, honourable.

³⁰ Provide.

³¹ Tortured.

³² Confess; German, "bekennen."

³³ Doubt.

³⁴ Allegiance.

³⁵ Decree, command.

³⁶ Land.

³⁷ Again.

³⁸ In danger of perishing.

To gauren¹ on this ship, and on Constance :
But shortly from the castle, on a night,
The lord's steward,—God give him mischance,—
A thief that had renied our cressance,²
Came to the ship alone, and said he would
Her leman³ be, whether she would or n'ould.⁴

Woe was this wretched woman then begone ;
Her child cri'd, and she cried piteously :
But blisful Mary help'd her right anon,
For, with her struggling well and mightily,
The thief fell overboard all suddenly,
And in the sea he drenched⁵ for vengeance,
And thus hath Christ unwemmed⁶ kept Con-
stance.

O foul lust of luxury ! lo thine end !
Not only that thou faintest⁷ mann's mind,
But verily thou wilt his body shend.⁸
Th' end of thy work, or of thy lust's blind,
Is complaining : how many may men find,
That not for work, sometimes, but for th' intent
To do this sin, be either slain or shent ?

How may this weak woman have the strength
Her to defend against this renegade ?
O Goliath, unmeasurable of length,
How might'st David mak's thee so mate ?⁹
So young, and of armour so desolate,¹⁰
How durst he look upon thy dreadful face ?
Well may men see it was but Godde's grace.

Who gave Judith courage or hardiness
To slay him, Holofernes, in his tent,
And to deliver out of wretchedness
The people of God ? I say for this intent,
That right as God spirit of vigour sent
To them, and saved them out of mischance,
So sent he might and vigour to Constance.

Forth went her ship throughout the narrow
mouth
Of Jubaltare and Septe,¹¹ driving alway,
Sometime west, and sometime north and south,
And sometime east, full many a weary day :
Till Christ's mother (blessed be she aye)
Had shapen¹² through her endless goodness
To make an end of all her heaviness.

Now let us stint of Constance but a throw,¹³
And speak we of the Roman emperor,
That out of Syria had by letters know
The slaughter of Christian folk, and dishonour
Done to his daughter by a false traitor,—
I mean the cursed wicked Soudaness,
That at the feast let¹⁴ slay both more and less.

For which this emperor had sent anon
His senator, with royal ordinance,
And other lordes, God wot, many a one,
On Syrians to tak's high vengeance :
They burn and slay, and bring them to mis-
chance

Full many a day : but shortly this is th' end,
Homeward to Rome they shapen them to wend.

This senator repaired with victory

To Rome-ward, sailing full royally,
And met the ship driving, as saith the story,
In which Constance sat full piteously :
And nothing knew he what she was, nor why
She was in such array ; nor she will say
Of her estate, although that she should dey.¹⁵

He brought her unto Rome, and to his wife
He gave her, and her young's son also :
And with the senator she led her life.
Thus can our Lady bringen out of woe
Woeful Constance, and many another mo' :
And long's time she dwelled in that place,
In holy works ever, as was her grace.

The senator's wife her aunt's was,
But for all that she knew her ne'er the more :
I will no longer tarry in this case,
But to King Alla, whom I spake of yore,
That for his wife wept and sighed sore,
I will return, and leave I will Constance
Under the senator's governance.

King Alla, which that had his mother slain,
Upon a day fell in such repentance,
That, if I shortly tell it shall and plain,
To Rome he came to receive his penance,
And put him in the Pope's ordinance
In high and low, and Jesus Christ besought
Forgive his wicked works that he had wrought.

The fame anon throughout the town is borne,
How Alla king shall come on pilgrimage,
By harbingers that went's him befor,
For which the senator, as was usage,
Rode him again,¹⁶ and many of his lineage,
As well to show his high magnificence,
As to do any king a reverence.

Great cheer¹⁷ did this noble senator
To King Alla, and he to him also ;
Each of them did the other great honour ;
And so befell, that in a day or two
This senator did to King Alla go
To feast, and shortly, if I shall not lie,
Constance's son went in his company.

Some men would say,¹⁸ at request of Constance
This senator had led this child to feast :
I may not tellen every circumstance,
Be as he may, there was he at the least :
But sooth is this, that at his mother's heat¹⁹
Before Alla, during the meat's space,²⁰
The child stood, looking in the king's face.

This Alla king had of this child great wonder,
And to the senator he said anon,
"Whose is that fair child that standeth yonder?"
"I n'ot,"²¹ quoth he, "by God and by Saint John ;
A mother he hath, but father hath he none,
That I of wot : " and shortly in a stound²²
He told to Alla how this child was found.

"But God wot," quoth this senator also,
"So virtuous a liver in all my life
I never saw, as she, nor heard of mo'
Of worldly woman, maiden, widow or wife :

¹ Gaze, stare.

² Illicit lover.

³ Was drowned.

⁴ Weakenest.

⁵ Abashed, overthrown.

⁶ Gibraltar and Ceuta.

⁷ Denied our faith.

⁸ Would not.

⁹ Unblemished.

¹⁰ Destroy.

¹¹ Devoid.

¹² Resolved, arranged.

¹³ A short time ; as long as a cast of the dice.

¹⁴ Caused.

¹⁵ Die.

¹⁶ To meet him.

¹⁷ Courtesy, profession of welcome.

¹⁸ The poet here refers to Gower's version of the story.

¹⁹ Command.

²⁰ Meal time.

²¹ Know not.

²² Short time.

I dare well say she haddē lever¹ a knife
Throughout her breast, than be a woman wick'²,
There is no man could bring her to that prick.³

Now was this child as like unto Constance
As possible is a creature to be :

This Alla had the face in remembrance
Of Dame Constance, and thereon mused he,
If that the child's mother were aught she⁴
That was his wife ; and privily he sight,⁵
And sped him from the table that he might.⁶

"Parfay,"⁷ thought he, "phantom⁸ is in
mine head.

I ought to deem, of skilful judgēment,⁹
That in the saltē sea my wife is dead."
And afterward he made his argument,
"What wot I, if that Christ have hither sent
My wife by sea, as well as he her sent
To my country, from thennēs that she went?"

And, after noon, home with the senator
Went Alla, for to see this wondrous chance.
This senator did Alla great honor,
And hastily he sent after Constance :
But trustē well, her listē not to dance.
When that she wistē wherefore was that sond,¹⁰
Unneth¹¹ upon her feet she mightē stand.

When Alla saw his wife, fair he her gret,¹²
And wept, that it was ruthē for to see,
For at the firstē look he on her set
He knew well verily that it was she :
And she, for sorrow, as dumb stood as a tree :
So was her heartē shut in her distress,
When she remember'd his unkindēness.

Twicē she swooned in his owen sight,
He wept and him excused piteously :
"Now God," quoth he, "and all his hallow¹³
bright

So wily¹⁴ on my soulē have mercē,
That of your harm as guiltless am I,
As is Maurice my son, so like your face,
Else may the fiend me fetch out of this place."

Long was the sobbing and the bitter pain,
Ere that their woeful heartēs mightē cease ;
Great was the pity for to hear them plain,¹⁵
Through whichē plaintēs gan their woe increase.
I pray you all my labour to release,
I may not tell all their woe till to-morrow,
I am so weary for to speak of sorrow.

But finally, when that the sooth is wist,¹⁶
That Alla guiltless was of all her woe,
I trow an hundred timēs have they kis'd,
And such a bliss is there betwixt them two,
That, save the joy that lasteth evermo',
There is none like, that any creatūre
Hath seen, or shall see, while the world may dure.

Then prayed she her husband meekely
In the relief of her long piteous pine,¹⁷
That he would pray her father specially,
That of his majesty he would incline

To vouchsafe some day with him to dine :
She pray'd him eke, that he should by no way
Unto her father no word of her say.

Some men would say, how that the child
Maurice

Did this messāge unto the emperor :
But, as I guess, Alla was not so nice,¹⁸
To him that is so sovereign of honor
As he that is of Christian folk the flow'r,
Send any child, but better 'tis to deem
He went himself ; and so it may well seem.

This emperor hath granted gentilly
To come to dinner, as he him besought :
And well rede¹⁹ I, he looked busily
Upon this child, and on his daughter thought.
Alla went to his inn, and as him ought
Arrayed²⁰ for this feast in every wise,
As farforth as his cunning²¹ may suffice.

The morrow came, and Alla gan him dress,²²
And eke his wife, the emperor to meet :
And forth they rode in joy and in gladness,
And when she saw her father in the street,
She lighted down and fell before his feet.
"Father," quoth she, "your youngē child
Constance

Is now full clean out of your remembrance.

"I am your daughter, your Constance," quoth
she,

"That whilom ye have sent into Syrie ;
It am I, father, that in the salt sea
Was put alone, and damned²³ for to die.
Now, goodē father, I you mercy cry,
Send me no more into none heathenēs,
But thank my lord here of his kindēness."

Who can the piteous joyē tellen all,
Betwixt them three, since they be thus y-met ?
But of my talē make an end I shall,
The day goes fast, I will no longer let.²⁴
These gladdē folk to dinner be y-set ;
In joy and bliss at meat I let them dwell,
A thousand fold well more than I can tell.

This child Maurice was since then emperor
Made by the Pope, and lived Christianly,
To Christē's Churchē did he great honor :
But I let all his story passē by,
Of Constance is my tale especially,
In the oldē Roman gestēs²⁵ men may find
Maurice's life, I bear it not in mind.

This King Alla, when he his timē sey,²⁶
With his Constance, his holy wife so sweet,
To England are they come the rightē way,
Where they did live in joy and in quiet.
But little while it lasted, I you hete,²⁷
Joy of this world for time will not abide,
From day to night it changeth as the tide.

Who liv'd ever in such delight one day,
That him not moved either conscience,
Or ire, or talent, or some kind affray,²⁸

1 Rather. 2 Wicked.

3 Could by any chance be she.

4 Fast as he could.

5 A phantom, mere fancy.

6 I should be certain.

7 By my faith.

8 Message, summons.

9 Not easily, with difficulty.

10 Greeted.

11 Salute.

12 Surely.

13 Point.

14 Sighed.

15 By my faith.

16 Message, summons.

17 Greeted.

18 Mourn, complain.

19 Truth is known.

20 Bude, foolish.

21 So far as his skill.

22 Condemned, doomed.

23 Res geste ; " histories, exploits.

24 Saw.

25 Disturbance.

26 Sorrow.

27 Guess, know.

28 Prepared.

29 Make ready.

30 Hinder.

31 Exploits.

32 Promise.

Envy, or pride, or passion, or offence?
I say but for this end¹ this sentence,
That little while in joy or in plesance
Lasted the bliss of Alla with Constance.

For death, that takes of high and low his rent,
When passed was a year, even as I guess,
Out of this world this King Alla he hent,²
For whom Constance had full great heaviness.
Now let us pray that God his soules bless:
And Dame Constance, finally to say,
Toward the town of Rome went her way.

To Rome is come this holy creature,
And findeth there her friend³ whole and sound:
Now is she escaped all her aventure:
And when that she her father hath y-found,
Down on her kneës falleth she to ground,
Weeping for tenderness in heart⁴ blithe
She herieth⁵ God an hundred thousand sithe.⁶

In virtue and in holy almshouse-deed
They live all, and ne'er asunder wend;
Till death departeth them, this life they lead:
And fare now well, my tale is at an end.—
Now Jesus Christ, that of his might may send
Joy after woe, govern us in his grace,
And keep us all that be in this place.

THE WIFE OF BATH'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.⁷

EXPERIENCE, though none authority⁸
Were in this world, is right enough for me
To speak of woe that is in marriage:
For, lordings, since I twelve year was of age,
(Thanked be God that is etern on live),⁹
Husbands at the church door have I had five,¹⁰ —
For I so often have y-wedded be,—
And all were worthy men in their degree.
But me was told, not long¹¹ timē gone is,
That sithen¹² Christ¹³ went never but onēs
To wedding, in the Cane¹⁴ of Galilee,
That by that ilk¹⁵ example taught he me,
That I not wedded should¹⁶ be but once.
Lo, hearken eke a sharp word for the nonce,¹⁷
Beside a well¹⁸ Jesus, God and man,
Spake in reproof of the Samaritan:

¹ Judgment, opinion.² Snatched.³ Friend.⁴ Times.

⁵ Among the evidences that Chaucer's great work was left incomplete, is the absence of any link of connexion between the Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale, and what goes before. This deficiency has in some editions caused the Squire's and the Merchant's Tales to be interposed between those of the Man of Law and the Wife of Bath; but in the Merchant's Tale there is internal proof that it was told after the jolly Dame's. Several manuscripts contain verses designed to serve as a connexion; but they are evidently not Chaucer's, and it is unnecessary to give them here. Of this Prologue, which may fairly be regarded as a distinct autobiographical tale, Tyrwhitt says: "The extraordinary length of it, as well as the vein of pleasantry that runs through it, is very suitable to the character of the speaker. The greatest part must have been of Chaucer's own invention, though one may plainly see that he had been reading the popular invectives against marriage and women in general; such as the 'Roman de la Rose,' 'Valerius ad Rufinum, De non Ducenda

"Thou hast y-had five husbandē," said he;
"And thilk¹² man, that now hath wedded thee,
Is not thine husband:"¹⁴ thus said he certāin;
What that he meant thereby, I cannot sayn.
But that I askē, why the fifthē man
Was not husband to the Samaritan?
How many might she have in marriage?
Yet heard I never tellen in mine age¹⁵
Upon this number definitioun.
Men may divine, and glosen¹⁶ up and down;
But well I wot, express without a lie,
God bade us for to wax and multiply;
That gentle text can I well understand.
Eke well I wot, he said, that mine husband
Should leave father and mother, and take to
me;

But of no number mentioun made he,
Of bigamy or of octogamy;
Why then should men speak of it villainy?¹⁷

Lo here, the wisē king Dan¹⁸ Solomon,
I trow that he had wivēs more than one;
As would to God it lawful were to me
To be refreshed half so oft as he!
What gift¹⁹ of God had he for all his wivēs?
No man hath such, that in this world alive is.
God wot, this noble king, as to my wit,²⁰
The first night had many a merry fit
With each of them, so well was him on live.²¹
Blessed be God that I have wedded five!
Welcome the sixth whenever that he shall.
For since I will not keep me chaste in all,
When mine husband is from the world y-gone,
Some Christian man shall weddē me anon.
For then th' apostle saith that I am free
To wed, a' God's half,²² where it liketh me.
He saith, that to be wedded is no sin;
Better is to be wedded than to brin.²³
What recketh me²⁴ though folk say villainy²⁵
Of shrewed²⁶ Lamech, and his bigamy?
I wot well Abraham was a holy man,
And Jacob eke, as far as ev'r I can.²⁷
And each of them had wivēs more than two;
And many another holy man also.
Where can ye see, in any manner age,²⁸
That highē God defended²⁹ marriage
By word express? I pray you tell it me;
Or where commanded he virginity?
I wot as well as you, it is no dread,³⁰
Th' apostle, when he spake of maidenhead,

Uxore,' and particularly 'Hieronymus contra Jovinianum.' St Jerome, among other things designed to discourage marriage, has inserted in his treatise along passage from 'Liber Aureolus Theophrasti de Nuptiis.'⁶ Authorities, written opinions, texts.

⁷ Lives eternally.⁸ Great part of the marriage service used to be performed in the church-porch.⁹ Since.¹⁰ Cana.¹¹ Same.¹² Occasion.¹³ That.¹⁴ John iv. 13.¹⁵ In my life.¹⁶ Comment, make glosses.¹⁷ As if it were a disgrace.¹⁸ Lord; "dominus."¹⁹ Another reading is "the wisē man, king Solomon."²⁰ What special favour or licence.²¹ As I understand, as I take it.²² So well went things with him in his life.²³ On God's part.²⁴ Burn.²⁵ What care I.²⁶ Evil.²⁷ Impious, wicked.²⁸ Know.²⁹ In any period.³⁰ Forbade; French, "defendit," to prohibit.³¹ Doubt.

He said, that precept thereof had he none :
Men may counsell a woman to be one,¹
But counseling is no commandment ;
He put it in our owen judgement.
For, haddē God commanded maidenhead,
Then had he damnd² wedding out of dread ;³
And certes, if there were no seed y-sow,⁴
Virginity then whereof should it grow ?
Paul durstē not commanden, at the least,
A thing of which his Master gave no heest.⁵
The dart⁶ is set up for virginity ;
Catch whoso may, who runneth best let see.
But this word is not ta'en of every wight,
But there as⁷ God will give it of his might.
I wot well that th' apostle was a maid,
But natheless, although he wrote and said,
He would that every wight were such as he,
All is but counsel to virginity.
And, since to be a wife he gave me leave
Of indulgence, so is it no reprove⁸
To weddē me, if that my make⁹ should die,
Without exception¹⁰ of bigamy ;
All were it¹¹ good no woman for to touch
(He meant as in his bed or in his couch),
For peril is both fire and tow t' assemble ;
Ye know what this example may resemble.
This is all and some, he held virginity
More profit than wedding in frailty :¹²
(Frailty clepe I, but if¹³ that he and she
Would lead their livēs all in chastity),
I grant it well, I have of none envy
Who maidenhead prefer to bigamy ;
It liketh them t' be clean in body and ghost ;¹⁴
Of mine estate¹⁵ I will not make a bonst.
For, well ye know, a lord in his household
Hath not every vessel all of gold ;¹⁶
Some are of tree, and do their lord service.
God calleth folk to him in sundry wise,
And each one hath of God a proper gift,
Some this, some that, as liketh him to shift.¹⁷
Virginity is great perfection,
And continence eke with devotiōn :
But Christ, that of perfection is the well,¹⁸
Bade not every wight he should go sell
All that he had, and give it to the poor,
And in such wise follow him and his lore :¹⁹
He spake to them that would live perfectly,—
And, lordings, by your leave, that am not I ;
I will bestow the flower of mine age
In th' acts and in the fruits of marriage.

Tell me also, to what conclusiōn²⁰
Were members made of generatiōn,
And of so perfect wise a wight²¹ y-wrought ?
Trust me right well, they were not made for
nought.

Glose whoso will, and say both up and down,
That they were made for the purgatiōn

¹ A maid.

² Doubt.

³ The goal ; a spear or dart was set up to mark the point of victory.

⁴ Scandal, reproach.

⁵ Charge, reproach.

⁶ Frailty.

⁷ Spirit.

⁸ "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silyer, but also of wood and of earth ; and some to honour, and some to dishonour."—2 Tim. ii. 20.

⁹ Condemned.

¹⁰ Command.

¹¹ The goal ; a spear or dart was set up to mark the point of victory.

¹² Except where.

¹³ Mate, husband.

¹⁴ Although it were.

¹⁵ Frailty I call it, unless.

¹⁶ Condition.

Of urine, and of other thingēs smale,
And eke to know a female from a male :
And for none other causē ? say ye no !
Experience wot well it is not so.
So that the clerkēs²² be not with me wroth,
I say this, that they werē made for both,
That is to say, for office,²³ and for ease²⁴
Of engendrure, there we God not displease.
Why should men ellēs in their bookēs set,
That man shall yield unto his wife her debt ?
Now wherewith should he make his payēment,
If he us'd not his silly instrument ?
Then were they made upon a creature
To purge urine, and eke for engendrure.
But I say not that every wight is hold,²⁵
That hath such harness²⁶ as I to you told,
To go and usē them in engendrure ;
Then should men take of chastity no cure.²⁷
Christ was a maid, and shapen²⁸ as a man,
And many a saint, since that this world began,
Yet ever liv'd in perfect chastity.
I will not vie²⁹ with no virginity.
Let them with bread of pure³⁰ wheat be fed,
And let us wivēs eat our barley bread.
And yet with barley bread, Mark tell us can,³¹
Our Lord Jesus refreshed many a man.
In such estate as God hath cleped us,³²
I'll persevere, I am not precious,³³
In wifehood I will use mine instrument
As freely as my Maker hath it sent.
If I be dangerous³⁴ God give me sorrow ;
Mine husband shall it have, both eve and mor-
row,

When that him list come forth and pay his
debt.

A husband will I have, I will no let,³⁵
Which shall be both my debtor and my thrall,³⁶
And have his tribulatiōn withal
Upon his flesh, while that I am his wife.
I have the power during all my life
Upon his proper body, and not he ;
Right thus th' apostle told it unto me,
And bade our husbands for to love us well ;
All this sentence me liketh every deal.—³⁷
Up start the Pardoner, and that anon ;
"Now, Dame," quoth he, "by God and by
Saint John,

Ye are a noble preacher in this case.
I was about to wed a wife, alas !
What ? should I bie³⁸ it on my flesh so dear ?
Yet had I lever³⁹ wed no wife this year."
"Abide,"⁴⁰ quoth she ; "my tale is not begun.
Nay, thou shalt drinke of another tun
Ere that I go, shall savour worse than ale.
And when that I have told thee forth my tale
Of tribulatiōn in marriage,
Of which I am expert in all mine age,

²² Appoint, distribute.

²³ Doctrine.

²⁴ Scholars.

²⁵ Held bound, obliged.

²⁶ Fashioned.

²⁷ Mark vi. 41, 42.

²⁸ Scrupulous, dainty, over-nice.

²⁹ Sparing, or difficult, of my favours.

³⁰ I will bear no hindrance.

³¹ Rather.

³² Fountain.

³³ End, purpose.

³⁴ Being.

³⁵ Pleasure.

³⁶ Care.

³⁷ Weapons.

³⁸ Contend.

³⁹ Parfited.

⁴⁰ Called us to.

⁴¹ Slave.

⁴² Suffer for.

⁴³ Wait in patience.

(This is to say, myself hath been the whip),¹
 Then mayest thou choose whether thou wilt sip
 Of thilkē tunnē,² that I now shall broach.
 Beware of it, ere thou too nigh approach,
 For I shall tell examples more than ten :
 Whoso will not beware by other men,
 By him shall other men corrected be :
 These samē wordēs writeth Ptolemy ;
 Read in his *Almagest*, and take it there."
 " Dame, I would pray you, if your will it were,"
 Saidē this Pardoner, " as ye began,
 Tell forth your tale, and sparē for no man,
 And teach us youngē men of your practique."
 " Gladly," quoth she, " since that it may you
 like.

But that I pray to all this company,
 If that I speak after my fantasy,
 To takē nought agrief³ what I may say ;
 For mine intent is only for to play. —

Now, Sirs, then will I tell you forth my tale.
 As ever may I drinkē wine or ale

I shall say sooth ; the husbands that I had
 Three of them werē good, and two were bad.
 The three were goodē men, and rich, and old.
 Unnethes⁴ mightē they the statute hold⁵
 In which that they were bounden unto me.
 Yet wot well what I mean of this, pardie.⁶
 As God me help, I laugh when that I think
 How piteously at night I made them swink,⁷
 But, by my fay,⁸ I told of it no store :⁹
 They had me giv'n their land and their treasour,

Me needēd not do longer diligence
 To win their love, or do them reverence.
 They loved me so well, by God above,
 That I toldē no dainty¹⁰ of their love.

A wise woman will busy her ever-in-one¹¹
 To get their lovē, where that she hath none.
 But, since I had them wholly in my hand,
 And that they had me given all their land,
 Why should I takē keep¹² them for to please,
 But¹³ it were for my profit, or mine ease ?

I set them so a-workē, by my fay,
 That many a night they sangē, well-away !
 The bacon was not fetchēd for them, I trow,
 That some men have in Essex at Dunmow.¹⁴

I govern'd them so well after my law,
 That each of them full blisful was and fawe¹⁵
 To bringē me gay thingēs from the fair.

They were full glad when that I spake them fair,
 For, God it wot, I chid them piteously.¹⁶
 Now hearken how I bare me properly.

Ye wisē wivēs, that can understand,
 Thus should ye speak, and bear them wrong on
 hand,¹⁷

For half so boldly can there no man
 Swearn and lien as a woman can.

(I say not this by wivēs that be wise,
 But if it be when they them misadvise.)¹⁸

A wisē wife, if that she can¹⁹ her good,
 Shall beare them on hand the cow is wood,²⁰

And takē witness of her owen maid
 Of their assent : but hearken how I said.

" Sir oldē kaynard,²¹ is this thine array ?
 Why is my neigheboure's wife so gay ?

She is honour'd over all where²² she go'th,
 I sit at home, I have no thrifty cloth.²³

What dost thou at my neigheboure's house ?
 Is she so fair ? art thou so amorōus ?

What rown'st²⁴ thou with our maid ? *ben'dicite*,
 Sir oldē lechour, let thy japēs²⁵ be.

And if I have a gossip, or a friend
 (Withoutē guilt), thou chideest as a fiend,

If that I walk or play unto his house.
 Thou comest home as drunken as a mouse,

And preachest on thy bench, with evil prefe :²⁶
 Thou say'st to me, it is a great mischief

To wed a poorē woman, for costage :²⁷
 And if that she be rich, of high parage,²⁸

Then say'st thou, that it is a tormentry
 To suffer her pride and melāncholy.

And if that she be fair, thou very knave,
 Thou say'st that every holour²⁹ will her have ;

She may no while in chastity abide,
 That is assailed upon every side.

Thou say'st some folk desire us for richēss,
 Some for our shape, and some for our fairnēss,

And some, for she can either sing or dance,
 And some for gentiles and dalliance,

Some for her handēs and her armēs smale :
 Thus goes all to the devil, by thy tale ;

Thou say'st, men may not keep a castle wall
 That may be so assailed over all.³⁰

And if that she be foul, thou say'st that she
 Coveteth every man that she may see ;

For as a spaniel she will on him leap,
 Till she may findē some man her to cheap :³¹

And none so grey goose goes there in the lake,
 (So say'st thou) that will be without a make.³²

And say'st, it is a hard thing for to weld³³
 A thing that no man will, his thankēs,³⁴ held.³⁵

Thus say'st thou, lorel,³⁶ when thou go'st to bed,
 And that no wise man needeth for to wed,

Nor no man that intendeth unto heaven.
 With wildē thunder dint³⁷ and fiery levon³⁸

Motē³⁹ thy wicked neckē be to-broke.
 Thou say'st, that dropping houses, and eke
 smoke,

And chiding wivēs, makē men to flee

¹ The instrument of administering torture.

² That tun.

³ Not to be offended by, not to take to heart.

⁴ With difficulty.

⁵ Fulfil the law.

⁶ By God, in God's name.

⁷ Labour.

⁸ Faith.

⁹ Held it of no account.

¹⁰ Cared nothing for, set no value on.

¹¹ Constantly.

¹² Care.

¹³ Unless.

¹⁴ At Dunmow prevailed the custom of giving, amid much merry-making, a fitch of bacon to the married pair who had lived together for a year without quarrel or regret. The same custom prevailed of old in Bretagne.

¹⁵ Happy and fain.

¹⁶ Angriely.

¹⁷ Make them believe falsely.

¹⁸ Unless they have acted unadvisedly. ¹⁹ Know.
²⁰ Delude them into believing that the cow is mad—or is made of wood.

²¹ "Cagnard," or "Caignard," a French term of reproach, originally derived from "cenis," a dog.

²² Wheresoever.

²³ Good clothing.

²⁴ Whisperst.

²⁵ Buffooneries, tricks.

²⁶ Proof.

²⁷ Expense.

²⁸ Birth, kindred ; from Latin, "pario," I beget.

²⁹ Whoremonger.

³⁰ Everywhere, on all sides.

³¹ Buy.

³² Mate.

³³ Weld, govern.

³⁴ With his good will.

³⁵ Hold.

³⁶ Good-for-nothing.

³⁷ Stroke.

³⁸ Lightning.

³⁹ May.

Out of their own house ; ah ! *ben'dicite*,
 What aileth such an old man for to chide ?
 Thou say'st, we wivës will our vices hide,
 Till we be fast,¹ and then we will them shew..
 Well may that be a proverb of a shrew.²
 Thou say'st, that oxen, asses, horses, hounds,
 They be assayed at diversë stounds,³
 Basons and lavers, ere that men them buy,
 Spoonës, stoolës, and all such husbandry,
 And so be pots, and clothës, and array,⁴
 But folk of wivës makë none assay,
 Till they be wedded,—oldë dotard shrew !—
 And then, say'st thou, we will our vices shew.
 Thou say'st also, that it displeaseth me,
 But if⁵ that thou wilt praisë my beauty,
 And but⁶ thou pore alway upon my face,
 And call me fairë dame in every place ;
 And but⁶ thou make a feast on thilkë⁶ day
 That I was born, and make me fresh and gay ;
 And but thou do to my norice⁷ honoür,
 And to my chamberere⁸ within my bow'r,
 And to my father's folk, and mine allies ;⁹
 Thus sayest thou, old barrel full of lies.
 And yet also of our prentice Jenkin,
 For his crisp hair, shining as gold so fine,
 And for he squireth me both up and down,
 Yet hast thou caught a false suspicioün :
 I will him not, though thou wert dead to-
 morrow.

But tell me this, why hidest thou, with sorrow,¹⁰
 The keyës of thy chest away from me ?
 It is my good¹¹ as well as thine, pardie.
 What, think'st to make an idiot of our dame ?
 Now, by that lord that called is Saint Jame,¹²
 Thou shalt not both, although that thou wert
 wood,¹³

Be master of my body, and my good,
 The one thou shalt forego, maugré¹⁴ thine eyen.
 What helpeth it of me t' inquire and spyen ?
 I trow thou wouldest lock me in thy chest.
 Thou shouldest say, 'Fair wife, go where thee
 lest ;¹⁵

Take your disport ; I will believe no tales ;
 I know you for a truë wife, Dame Alea.'¹⁶

"We love no man, that taketh keep¹⁷ or
 charge

Where that we go ; we will be at our large.
 Of allë men most blessed may he be,
 The wise astrologer Dan¹⁸ Ptolemy,
 That saith this proverb in his Almagest :
 'Of allë men his wisdom is highëst,
 That reckoneth not who hath the world in hand.'
 By this proverb thou shalt well understand,
 Have thou enough, what thar¹⁹ thee reck or care
 How merrily that other folkës fare ?
 For certes, oldë dotard, by your leave,

Ye shall have [pleasure] right enough at eve.
 He is too great a niggard that will werne²⁰
 A man to light a candle at his lantern ;
 He shall have never the less light, pardie.
 Have thou enough, thee thar¹⁹ not plainë²¹ thee.
 Thou say'st also, if that we make us gay
 With clothing and with precious array,
 That it is peril of our chastity.

And yet,—with sorrow !—thou enforcest thee,
 And say'st these words in the apostle's name :
 'In habit made with chastity and shame²²
 Ye women shall apparel you,' quoth he,
 'And not in tressed hair and gay perrie,²³
 As pearlës, nor with gold, nor clothës rich.'
 After thy text nor after thy rubrich
 I will not work as muchel as a gnat.
 Thou say'st also, I walk out like a cat ;
 For whoso woulde singe the cattö's skin,
 Then will the cattö well dwell in her inn ;²⁴
 And if the cattö's skin be aleek and gay,
 She will not dwell in housë half a day,
 But forth she will, ere any day be daw'd,
 To shew her skin, and go a caterwaw'd.²⁵
 This is to say, if I be gay, sir shrew,
 I will run out, my borel²⁶ for to shew.

Sir oldë fool, what helpeth thee to spyen ?
 Though thou pray Argus with his hundred eyen
 To be my wardëcorps,²⁷ as he can best,
 In faith he shall not keep me, but me lest :²⁸
 Yet could I make his beard,²⁹ so may I thé.³⁰

"Thou sayest eke, that there be thingës three,
 Which thingës greatly trouble all this earth,
 And that no wightë may endure the ferth :³¹
 O lefe³² sir shrew, may Jesus short³³ thy life.
 Yet preacheest thou, and say'st, a hateful wife
 Y-reckon'd is for one of these mischances.
 Be there none other manner resemblances³⁴
 That ye may liken your parables unto,
 But if a silly wife be one of tho ?³⁵
 Thou likenest a woman's love to hell ;
 To barren land, where water may not dwell.
 Thou likenest it also to wild fire ;
 The more it burns, the more it hath desire
 To cónsume every thing that burnt will be.
 Thou sayest, right as wormës shend³⁶ a tree,
 Right so a wife destroyeth her husbond ;
 This know they well that be to wivës bond."

Lordings, right thus, as ye have understand,
 Bare I stiffly mine old husbands on hand,³⁷
 That thus they saiden in their drunkenness ;
 And all was false, but that I took witness
 On Jenkin, and upon my niece also.
 O Lord ! the pain I did them, and the woe,
 Full guiltëless, by Goddë's sweetë pine ;³⁸
 For as a horse I couldë bite and whine ;
 I couldë plain,³⁹ an' ⁴⁰ I was in the guilt,

1 Wedded. 2 Ill-tempered wretch.
 3 Proved at various seasons. 4 Raiment.
 5 Unless. 6 That.
 7 Nurse ; French, "nourrice."
 8 Chamber-maid. 9 Relations.
 10 Sorrow on thee ! 11 Property.
 12 St Jago of Compostella. 13 Furious.
 14 Spite of. 15 Pleasea.
 16 Alice, Alison. 17 Care.
 18 Lord. This and the previous quotation from
 Ptolemy are due to the Dame's own fancy.
 19 Needs, behoves. 20 Forbid. 21 Complain.

22 Modesty. See 1 Tim. ii. 9.
 23 Precious stones, jewels. 24 House.
 25 Caterwauling. 26 Apparel, fine clothes.
 27 "Gardecorps," body-guard.
 28 Unless it please me.
 29 Make a jest of him.
 30 Thrive. 31 Fourth. 32 Pleasant.
 33 Shorten. 34 No other kind of comparisons.
 35 Those. 36 Destroy.
 37 Made them believe. 38 Pain.
 39 Complain.
 40 Even though.

Or ellës oftentime I had been spilt.¹
Whoso first cometh to the mill, first grint;²
I plained first, so was our war y-stint.³
They were full glad to excuse them full blive⁴
Of things that they never aguilt their live.⁵
Of wenches would I bearë them on hand,⁶
When that for sickness scarcely might they stand,

Yet tickled I his heartë for that he
Ween'd⁷ that I had of him so great chertë:⁸
I swore that all my walking out by night
Was for to éspy wenches that he dight:⁹
Under that colour had I many a mirth.
For all such wit is given us at birth;
Deceit, weeping, and spinning, God doth give
To women kindly,¹⁰ while that they may live.
And thus of one thing I may vauntë me,
At th' end I had the better in each degree,
By sleight, or force, or by some manner thing,
As by continual murmur or grudging,¹¹
Namely¹² a-bed, there haddë they mischance,
There would I chide, and do them no pleasance:
I would no longer in the bed abide,
If that I felt his arm over my side,
Till he had made his ransom unto me,
Then would I suffer him do his nicety.¹³
And therefore every man this tale I tell,
Win whoso may, for all is for to sell;
With empty hand men may no hawkës lure;
For winning would I all his will endure,
And makë me a feigned appetite,—
And yet in bacon¹⁴ had I never delight:
That made me that I ever would them chide.
For, though the Pope had sitten them beside,
I would not spare them at their owen board,
For, by my troth, I quit¹⁵ them word for word.
As help me very God omnipotent,
Though I right now should make my testament,
I owe them not a word, that is not quit,
I brought it so aboutë by my wit,
That they must give it up, as for the best,
Or ellës had we never been in rest.
For, though he looked as a wood¹⁶ líón,
Yet should he fail of his conclusión.
Then would I say, "Now, goodë lefo,¹⁷ take
keep¹⁸

How meekly looketh Wilken ourë sheep!
Come near, my spouse, and let me ba¹⁹ thy
cheek.

Ye shouldë be all patient and meek,
And have a sweet y-spiced²⁰ conscience,
Since ye so preach of Jobë's patience.
Suffer alway, since ye so well can preach,
And but²¹ ye do, certáin we shall you teach
That it is fair to have a wife in peace.
One of us two must bowë²² doubtëless:

¹ Ruined.² Is ground.³ Stopped.⁴ Quickly.⁵ Were never guilty of in their lives.⁶ Falsely accuse them.⁷ Thought.⁸ Affection; from French, "cher," dear.⁹ Adorned; took to himself.¹⁰ Naturally.¹¹ Complaining.¹² Especially.¹³ Folly; French, "niaiserie."¹⁴ The bacon of Dunmow.¹⁵ Requited, repaid.¹⁶ Furious.¹⁷ Dear.¹⁸ Heed, notice.¹⁹ Kiss; from French, "baiser."²⁰ Tender, nice.²¹ Unless.²² Bend, give way.²³ Murmur.²⁴ Whit.

And since a man is more reasonable
Than woman is, ye must be suff'able.
What aileth you to grudge²³ thus and groan?
Is it for ye would have my [love] alone?
Why, take it all: lo, have it every deal.²⁴
Peter!²⁵ I shrew²⁶ you but ye love it well.
For if I wouldë sell my bellë chose,
I couldë walk as fresh as is a rose,
But I will keep it for your owen tooth.
Ye be to blame, by God, I say you sooth."
Such manner wordës haddë we on hand.
Now will I speaken of my fourth husbánd.

My fourthë husband was a revellour;
This is to say, he had a paramour,
And I was young and full of ragerie,²⁷
Stubborn and strong, and jolly as a pie.
Then could I dancë to a harpë smale,
And sing, y-wis,²⁸ as any nightingale,
When I had drunk a draught of sweetë wine.
Metellius, the foulë churl, the swine,
That with a staff bereft his wife of life
For²⁹ she drank wine, though I had been his
wife,

Never should he have daunted me from drink:
And, after wine, of Venus most I think.
For all so sure as cold engenders hail,
A liquorish mouth must have a liquorish tail.
In woman vinolent³⁰ is no defence,³¹
This knowë lechours by experience.
But, lord Christ, when that it rememb'reth me
Upon my youth, and on my jollity,
It tickleth me about mine heartë-root;
Unto this day it doth mine heartë boot,³²
That I have had my world as in my time.
But age, alas! that all will envenime,³³
Hath me bereft my beauty and my pith:³⁴
Let go; farewell; the devil go therewith.
The flour is gone, there is no more to tell,
The bran, as I best may, now must I sell.
But yet to be right merry will I fand.³⁵
Now forth to tell you of my fourth husband.
I say, I in my heart had great despite,
That he of any other had delight;
But he was quit,³⁶ by God and by Saint Joce;³⁷
I made for him of the same wood a cross;
Not of my body in no foul mannëre,
But certainly I madë folk such cheer,
That in his owen grease I made him fry
For anger, and for very jealousy.
By God, in earth I was his purgatory,
For which I hope his soul may be in glory.
For, God it wot, he sat full oft and sung,
When that his shoe full bitterly him wrung.³⁸
There was no wight, save God and he, that wist
In many wise how sore I did him twist.
He died when I came from Jerusalem,

²⁵ By Saint Peter! a common adjuration, like Marie! from the Virgin's name.²⁶ Curse.²⁷ Wantonness.²⁸ Certainly.²⁹ Because.³⁰ Full of wine.³¹ Resistance.³² Good.³³ Poison, embitter.³⁴ Vigour.³⁵ Try.³⁶ Requited.³⁷ Or Judocus, a saint of Ponthieu, in France.³⁸ Pinched. "An allusion," says Mr Wright, "to the story of the Roman sage who, when blamed for divorcing his wife, said that a shoe might appear outwardly to fit well, but no one but the wearer knew where it pinched."

And lies in grave under the roodē beam : ¹
 Although his tomb is not so curious
 As was the sepulchre of Darius,
 Which that Apelles wrought so subtly.
 It is but waste to bury them preciously.
 Let him fare well, God give his soulē rest,
 He is now in his grave and in his chest.

Now of my fifthē husband will I tell :
 God let his soul never come into hell.
 And yet was he to me the mostē shrew ; ²
 That feel I on my ribbēs all by rew, ³
 And ever shall, until mine ending day.
 But in our bed he was so fresh and gay,
 And therewithal so well he could me glose, ⁴
 When that he wouldē have my *bellē chose*,
 Though he had beaten me on every bone,
 Yet could he win again my love anon.
 I trow, I lov'd him better, for that he
 Was of his love so dangerous ⁵ to me.
 We women have, if that I shall not lie,
 In this mattēr a quaintē fantasy.
 Whatever thing we may not lightly have,
 Thereafter will we cry all day and crave.
 Forbid us thing, and that desirē we ;
 Press on us fast, and thennē will we flee.
 With danger ⁶ utter we all our chaffare ; ⁷
 Great press at market maketh dearē ware,
 And too great cheap is held at little price ;
 This knoweth every woman that is wise.
 My fifthē husband, God his soulē bless,
 Which that I took for love and no richēs,
 He some time was a clerk of Oxenford, ⁸
 And had left school, and went at home to board
 With my gossip, dwelling in ourē town :
 God have her soul, her name was Alisoun.
 She knew my heart, and all my privy,
 Bet than our parish priest, so may I thé. ⁹
 To her betrayed I my counsel all ;
 For had my husband pissed on a wall,
 Or done a thing that should have cost his life,
 To her, and to another worthy wife,
 And to my nicce, which that I loved well,
 I would have told his counsel every deal. ¹⁰
 And so I did full often, God it wot,
 That made his face full often red and hot
 For very shame, and blam'd himself, for he
 Had told to me so great a privy. ¹¹
 And so befell that onēs in a Lent
 (So oftentimes I to my gossip went,
 For ever yet I loved to be gay,
 And for to walk in March, April, and May
 From house to house, to hearē sundry tales),
 That Jenkin clerk, and my gossip, Dame Ales,
 And I myself, into the fieldēs went.
 Mine husband was at London all that Lent ;
 I had the better leisure for to play,
 And for to see, and eke for to be sey ¹²
 Of lusty folk ; what wist I where my grace ¹³

¹ Cross. ² Cruel, ill-tempered. ³ In a row.
⁴ Flatter. ⁵ Sparing, difficult. ⁶ Difficulty.
⁷ Merchandise. ⁸ A scholar of Oxford. ⁹ Thrive.
¹⁰ Jot. ¹¹ Secret. ¹² Seen. ¹³ Favour.
¹⁴ Appointed. ¹⁵ Festival-eves. See note 21, page 21.
¹⁶ Gowns. ¹⁷ Fed. ¹⁸ Whit.
¹⁹ Worn. ²⁰ Foresight.
²¹ Boasting ; Ben Jonson's braggart, in "Every Man in his Humour," is named Bobadil.

Was shapen ¹⁴ for to be, or in what place ?
 Therefore made I my visitatiōns
 To vigilies, ¹⁵ and to processions,
 To preachings eke, and to these pilgrimāges,
 To plays of miracles, and marriāges,
 And weared upon me gay scarlet gites. ¹⁶
 These wormēs, nor these mothēs, nor these
 mites

On my apparel frett ¹⁷ them never a deal ¹⁸
 And know'st thou why ? for they were used ¹⁹
 well.

Now will I tellē forth what happen'd me :
 I say, that in the fieldēs walked we,
 Till truēly we had such dalliance,
 This clerk and I, that of my purveyance ²⁰
 I spake to him, and told him how that he,
 If I were widow, shouldē weddē me.
 For certainly, I say for no bobance, ²¹
 Yet was I never without purveyance ²²
 Of marriage, nor of other thingēs eke :
 I hold a mouse's wit not worth a leek,
 That hath but one hole for to startē to, ²³
 And if that failē, then is all y-do. ²⁴
 [I bare him on hand ²⁵ he had enchanted me
 (My damē taughtē me that subtilty) ;
 And eke I said, I mette ²⁶ of him all night,
 He would have slain me, as I lay upright,
 And all my bed was full of very blood ;
 But yet I hop'd that he should do me good ;
 For blood betoken'd gold, as me was taught.
 And all was false, I dream'd of him right
 naught,

But as I follow'd aye my damē's lore,
 As well of that as of other things more.]
 But now, sir, let me see, what shall I sayn ?
 Aha ! by God, I have my tale again.
 When that my fourthē husband was on bier,
 I wept algate ²⁷ and made a sorry cheer, ²⁸
 As wivēs must, for it is the usāge ;
 And with my kerchief covered my visāge ;
 But, for I was provided with a make, ²⁹
 I wept but little, that I undertake. ³⁰
 To churchē was mine husband borne a-morrow
 With neighēbours that for him madē sorrow,
 And Jenkin, ourē clerk, was one of tho : ³¹
 As help me God, when that I saw him go
 After the bier, methought he had a pair
 Of leggēs and of feet so clean and fair,
 That all my heart I gave unto his hold. ³²
 He was, I trow, a twenty winter old,
 And I was forty, if I shall say sooth,
 But yet I had always a coltē's tooth.
 Gat-toothed ³³ I was, and that became me
 well,

I had the print of Saintē Venus' seal.
 [As help me God, I was a lusty one,
 And fair, and rich, and young, and well be-
 gone : ³⁴

²⁵ A very old proverb in French, German, and Latin.
²⁶ "Startē," to escape. ²⁷ Done.
²⁸ Falsely assured him. ²⁹ Dreamed.
³⁰ Always. ³¹ Countenance. ³² Mate.
³³ Promise. ³⁴ Those. ³⁵ Keeping.
³⁶ Gap-toothed ; goat-toothed ; or cat- or separate
 toothed. See note 14, page 22.
³⁷ In a good way. The lines in brackets are only in
 some of the manuscripts.

For certes I am all venerian
In feeling, and my heart is martian;¹
Venus me gave my lust and liquorishness,
And Mars gave me my sturdy hardiness.]
Mine ascendant was Taure,² and Mars there-
in :

Alas, alas, that over love was sin !
I follow'd aye mine inclinacioun
By virtue of my constellacioun :
That made me that I couldē not withdraw
My chamber of Venus from a good fellaw.
[Yet have I Martē's mark upon my face,
And also in another privy place.
For God so wialy³ be my salvacioun,
I loved never by discretioun,
But ever follow'd mine own appetite,
All⁴ were he short, or long, or black, or white,
I took no keep,⁵ so that he liked me,
How poor he was, neither of what degree.]
What should I say? but that at the month's
end

This jolly clerk Jenkin, that was so hend,⁶
Had wedded me with great solemnity,
And to him gave I all the land and fee
That ever was me given therebefore :
But afterward repented me full sore.
He wouldē suffer nothing of my list.⁷
By God, he smote me onēs with his fist,
For that I rent out of his book a leaf,
That of the stroke mine earē wax'd all deaf.
Stubborn I was, as is a lioness,
And of my tongue a very jangleress,⁸
And walk I would, as I had done befor,
From house to house, although he had it
sworn :⁹

For which he oftentimes wouldē preach,
And me of oldē Roman gestēs¹⁰ teach.
How that Sulpitius Gallus left his wife,
And her forsook for term of all his life,
For nought but open-headed¹¹ he her say.¹²
Looking out at his door upon a day.
Another Roman¹³ told he me by name,
That, for his wife was at a summer game
Without his knowing, he forsook her eke.
And then would he upon his Bible seek
That ilkē¹⁴ proverb of Ecclesiast,
Where he commandeth, and forbiddeth fast,
Man shall not suffer his wife go roll about.
Then would he say right thus withoutē doubt :
" Whoso that buildeth his house all of sallows,¹⁵
And pricketh his blind horse over the fallows,
And suff'reth his wife to go seekē hallows,¹⁶
Is worthy to be hanged on the gallows."
But all for nought ; I settē not a haw¹⁷
Of his provérbs, nor of his oldē saw ;
Nor would I not of him corrected be.

I hate them that my vices tellē me,
And so do more of us (God wot) than I.
This made him wood¹⁸ with me all utterly ;
I wouldē not forbear¹⁹ him in no case.
Now will I say you sooth, by Saint Thomas,
Why that I rent out of his book a leaf,
For which he smote me, so that I was deaf.

He had a book, that gladly night and day
For his disport he would it read alway ;
He call'd it Valerie,²⁰ and Theophrast,
And with that book he laugh'd alway full fast.
And eke there was a clerk sometime at Rome,
A cardinal, that hightē Saint Jerome,
That made a book against Jovinian,
Which book was there ; and eke Tertullian,
Chrysippus, Trotula, and Heloise,
That was an abbess not far from Paris ;
And eke the Parables²¹ of Solomon,
Ovidē's Art,²² and bourdēs²³ many one ;
And allē these were bound in one volume.
And every night and day was his custume
(When he had leisure and vacatioun
From other worldly occupatioun)

To readen in this book of wicked wives.
He knew of them more legends and more lives
Than be of goodē wivēs in the Bible.
For, trust me well, it is an impossible
That any clerk will speakē good of wives,
(But if²⁴ it be of holy saintēs' lives)
Nor of none other woman never the mo'.
Who painted the lión, tell it me, who?
By God, if women haddē written stories,
As clerkēs have within their oratóries,
They would have writ of men more wickedness
Than all the mark of Adam²⁵ may redress.
The children of Mercury and of Venus,²⁶
Be in their working full contrarious.
Mercury loveth wisdom and sciēce,
And Venus loveth riot and dispence.²⁷
And for their diverse dispositioun,
Each falls in other's exaltatioun.²⁸
As thus, God wot, Mercúry is desolato
In Pisces, where Venus is exaltate,
And Venus falls where Mercury is raised.
Therefore no woman by no clerk is praised.
The clerk, when he is old, and may not do
Of Venus' works not worth his oldē shoe,
Then sits he down, and writes in his dotage,
That women cannot keep their marriage.
But now to purpose, why I toldē thee
That I was beaten for a book, pardie.

Upon a night Jenkin, that was our sire,²⁹
Read on his book, as he sat by the fire,
Of Eva first, that for her wickedness
Was all mankind brought into wretchedness,
For which that Jesus Christ himself was slain,

¹ Under the influence of Mars.

² Taurus, the Bull.

³ Certainly.

⁴ Whether.

⁵ Heed.

⁶ Handsome, courteous.

⁷ Pleasure.

⁸ Prater.

⁹ Had sworn to prevent it.

¹⁰ Stories.

¹¹ Bare-headed.

¹² Saw.

¹³ Sempronius Sophus, of whom Valerius Maximus tells in his sixth book.

¹⁴ Same.

¹⁵ Willows.

¹⁶ Make pilgrimages to shrines of saints.

¹⁷ Cared not a straw.

¹⁸ Furious.

¹⁹ Endure, bear with.

²⁰ The tract of Walter Mapes against marriage, published under the title of "Epistola Valerii ad Rufinum."

²¹ Proverbs.

²² "Ars Amoris."

²³ Jest.

²⁴ Unless.

²⁵ All who bear the mark of Adam—all men.

²⁶ Those born under the influence of the respective planets.

²⁷ Expense.

²⁸ A planet, according to the old astrologers, was in "exaltation" when in the sign of the Zodiac in which it exerted its strongest influence ; the opposite sign, in which it was weakest, was called its "dejection." Venus being strongest in Pisces, was weakest in Virgo ; but in Virgo Mercury was in "exaltation."

²⁹ Goodman.

That bought us with his heartë-blood again.
 Lo here express of women may ye find
 That woman was the loss of all mankind.
 Then read he me how Samson lost his hairs
 Sleeping, his leman cut them with her shears,
 Through whichë treason lost he both his eyen.
 Then read he me, if that I shall not lien,
 Of Hercules, and of his Dejanire,
 That caused him to set himself on fire.
 Nothing forgot he of the care and woe
 That Socrates had with his wivës two ;
 How Xantippe cast piss upon his head.
 This silly man sat still, as he were dead,
 He wip'd his head, and no more durst he sayn,
 But, "Ere the thunder stint,¹ there cometh
 rain."

Of Phasiphaë, that was queen of Crete,
 For shrewedness² he thought the talë sweet.
 Fy, speak no more, it is a grisly thing,
 Of her horrible lust and her liking.
 Of Clytemnestra, for her lechery
 That falsely made her husband for to die,
 He read it with full good devotiön.
 He told me eke, for what occasiön
 Amphiorax at Thebes lost his life :
 My husband had a legend of his wife
 Eryphilë, that for an ouche³ of gold
 Had privily unto the Greekës told,
 Where that her husband hid him in a place,
 For which he had at Thebes sorry grace.
 Of Luna told he me, and of Lucie ;
 They bothë made their husbands for to die,
 That one for love, that other was for hate.
 Luna her husband on an ev'ning late
 Empoison'd had, for that she was his foe :
 Lucia liquorish lov'd her husband so,
 That, for he should always upon her think,
 She gave him such a manner⁴ lovë-drink,
 That he was dead before it were the morrow :
 And thus alगतës⁵ husbands haddë sorrow :
 Then told he me how one Latumeus
 Complained to his fellow Arius
 That in his garden growed such a tree,
 On which he said how that his wivës three
 Hanged themselves for heart dispiteous.
 "O leve⁶ brother," quoth this Arius,
 "Give me a plant of thilkë⁷ blessed tree,
 And in my garden planted shall it be."
 Of later date of wivës hath he read,
 That some have slain their husbands in their
 bed,
 And let their lechour dight them all the night,
 While that the corpse lay on the floor upright :
 And some have driven nails into their brain,
 While that they slept, and thus they have them
 slain :

Some have them given poison in their drink :
 He spake more harm than heartë may bethink.

And therewithal he knew of more provërbs,
 Than in this world there groweth grass or herba.
 "Better (quoth he) thine habitatiön
 Be with a lion, or a foul dragon,

Than with a woman using for to chide.
 Better (quoth he) high in the roof abide,
 Than with an angry woman in the house,
 They be so wicked and contrariöus :
 They hatë that their husbands loven aye."
 He said, "A woman cast her shame away
 When she cast off her smock ;" and farthermo',
 "A fair woman, but⁸ she be chaste also,
 Is like a gold ring in a sowë's nose."
 Who couldë ween,⁹ or who couldë suppose
 The woe that in mine heart was, and the
 pine?¹⁰

And when I saw that he would never fine¹¹
 To readen on this cursed book all night,
 All suddenly three leavës have I plight¹²
 Out of his book, right as he read, and eke
 I with my fist so took him on the cheek,
 That in our fire he backward fell adown.
 And he up start, as doth a wood liön,
 And with his fist he smote me on the head,
 That on the floor I lay as I were dead.
 And when he saw how still that there I lay,
 He was aghast, and would have fled away,
 Till at the last out of my swoon I braid,¹³
 "Oh, hast thou slain me, thou false thief?" I
 said,

"And for my land thus hast thou murder'd me?
 Ere I be dead, yet will I kissë thee."
 And near he came, and kneeled fair adown,
 And saidë, "Dearë sister Alisoun,
 As help me God, I shall thee never smite :
 That I have done it is thyself to wite,¹⁴
 Forgive it me, and that I thee beseek."¹⁵
 And yet eftsoons¹⁶ I hit him on the cheek,
 And saidë, "Thief, thus much am I awreak.¹⁷
 Now will I die, I may no longer speak."

But at the last, with muchë care and woe
 We fell accorded¹⁸ by ourselvës two :
 He gave me all the bridle in mine hand
 To have the governance of house and land,
 And of his tongue, and of his hand also.
 I made him burn his book anon right tho.¹⁹
 And when that I had gotten unto me
 By mast'ry all the sovereignëty,
 And that he said, "Mine owen truë wife,
 Do as thee list,²⁰ the term of all thy life,
 Keep thine honoür, and eke keep mine estate ;"
 After that day we never had debate.
 God help me so, I was to him as kind
 As any wife from Denmark unto Ind,
 And also true, and so was he to me :
 I pray to God that sits in majesty
 So bless his soulë, for his mercy dear.
 Now will I say my tale, if ye will hear.—

The Friar laugh'd when he had heard all this :
 "Now, Dame," quoth he, "so have I joy and
 bliss,
 This is a long preamble of a tale."
 And when the Sompnour heard the Friar gale,²¹
 "Lo," quoth this Sompnour, "Goddë's armës
 two,

1 Ceases.

2 Wickedness.

3 Clasp, collar.

4 Sort of.

5 Always.

6 Dear.

7 That.

8 Except.

9 Think.

10 Pain.

11 Have done, end.

12 Plucked.

13 Woke.

14 Blame.

15 Beseech.

16 Immediately ; again.

17 Avenged.

18 Agreed.

19 Then.

20 Pleases thee.

21 Speak, flout ; "chaff."

A friar will intermete¹ him evermo':
Lo, goodē men, a fly and eke a frere
Will fall in ev'ry dish and eke mattère.
What speak'st thou of perambulatioŋ?²
What? amble or trot; or peace, or go sit down:
Thou lettest³ our disport in this mattère."

"Yea, wilt thou so, Sir Sompnour?" quoth the
Frere;

"Now by my faith I shall, ere that I go,
Tell of a Sompnour such a tale or two,
That all the folk shall laughen in this place."
"Now do, else, Friar, I beshrew⁴ thy face,"
Quoth this Sompnour; "and I beshrewē me,
But if⁵ I tellē talēs two or three
Of friars, ere I come to Sittingbourne,
That I shall make thine heartē for to mourn:
For well I wot thy patience is gone."
Our Hostē criēd, "Peace, and that anon;"
And saidē, "Let the woman tell her tale.
Ye fare⁶ as folk that drunken be of ale.
Do, Dame, tell forth your tale, and that is best."
"All ready, sir," quoth she, "right as you lest,⁷
If I have licence of this worthy Frere."
"Yea, Dame," quoth he, "tell forth, and I will
hear."

THE TALE.⁸

In oldē dayēs of the king Arthoŋr,
Of which that Britons speakē great honoŋr,
All was this land full fill'd of faërie;⁹
The Elf-queen, with her jolly company,
Danced full oft in many a green mead.
This was the old opinion, as I read;
I speak of many hundred years ago;
But now can no man see none elvēs mo',
For now the great charity and prayēres
Of limitours,¹⁰ and other holy freres,
That search every land and ev'ry stream,
As thick as motēs in the sunnē-beam,
Blessing halls, chambers, kitchenēs, and bowers,
Cities and burghēs, castles high and towers,
Thorpēs¹¹ and barnēs, shepens¹² and dairies,
This makes that there be now no faëries:
For there as¹³ went to walkē was an elf,
There walketh now the limitour himself,
In undermelēs¹⁴ and in morrownings,
And saith his matins and his holy things,
As he goes in his limitatioŋ.¹⁵
Women may now go safely up and down,
In every bush, and under every tree;
There is none other incubus¹⁶ but he;
And he will do to them no dishonoŋr.

¹ Interpose; French, "entremettre."

² Preamble. Some editions print "preambulation," but the word in the text seems meant to show up the ignorance of the clergy, as Chaucer lost no occasion of doing.

³ Hinderest.

⁴ Curse.

⁵ Unless.

⁶ Behave.

⁷ Please.

⁸ It is not clear whence Chaucer derived this tale. Tyrwhitt thinks it was taken from the story of Florent, in the first book of Gower's "Confessio Amantis;" or perhaps from an older narrative from which Gower himself borrowed. Chaucer has condensed and otherwise improved the fable, especially by laying the scene, not in Sicily, but at the court of our own King Arthur.

⁹ Fairies; French, "féerie."

¹⁰ Begging friars. See note 27, page 19.

¹¹ Villages. Compare German, "Dorf."

And so befell it, that this king Arthoŋr
Had in his house a lusty bachelér,
That on a day came riding from rivér:¹⁷
And happen'd, that, alone as she was born,
He saw a maiden walking him beforŋ,
Of which maiden anon, maugré¹⁸ her head,
By very force he reft her maidenhead:
For which oppressioŋ was such clamoŋr,
And such pursuit unto the king Arthoŋr,
That damned¹⁹ was this knight for to be dead
By course of law, and should have lost his head;
(Paraventure such²⁰ was the statute tho),²¹
But that the queen and other ladies mo'
So long they prayed the king of his grace,
Till he his life him granted in the place,
And gave him to the queen, all at her will
To choose whether she would him save or spill.²²
The queen thanked the king with all her might;
And, after this, thus spake she to the knight,
When that she saw her time upon a day.
"Thou standest yet," quoth she, "in such
array,"²³

That of thy life yet hast thou no surety;
I grant thee life, if thou canst tell to me
What thing is it that women most desiren:
Beware, and keep thy neck-bone from the
iron.²⁴

And if thou canst not tell it me anon,
Yet will I give thee leavē for to gon
A twelvemonth and a day, to seek and lear²⁵
An answer suffisant²⁶ in this mattère.
And surety will I have, ere that thou pace,²⁷
Thy body for to yelden in this place."
Woe was the knight, and sorrowfully siked;²⁸
But what? he might not do all as him liked.
And at the last he chose him for to wend,²⁹
And come again, right at the yearē's end,
With such answeŋ as God would him purvey:³⁰
And took his leave, and wended forth his way.

He sought in ev'ry house and ev'ry place,
Where as he hoped for to findē grace,
To learnē what thing women love the most:
But he could not arrive in any coast,
Where as he mightē find in this mattère
Two creaturēs according in fere.³¹
Some said that women loved best richēs,
Some said honoŋr, and some said jolliness,
Some rich array, and some said lust³² a-bed,
And oft time to be widow and be wed.
Some said, that we are in our heart most eased
When that we are y-flatter'd and y-praised.
He went full nigh the sooth,³³ I will not lie;
A man shall win us best with flattery;

¹² Stables, sheep-pens.

¹³ Where.

¹⁴ Evening-tides, afternoons; "undern" signifies the evening; and "mele," corresponds to the German "Mal" or "Mahl," time.

¹⁵ Begging district.

¹⁶ An evil spirit supposed to do violence to women; a nightmare.

¹⁷ Where he had been hawking after waterfowl. Froissart says that any one engaged in this sport "alloit en rivière."

¹⁸ Spite of.

¹⁹ Condemned.

²⁰ For as it happened, such.

²¹ Then.

²² Execute, destroy.

²³ In such a position.

²⁴ The executioner's axe.

²⁵ Learn.

²⁶ Satisfactory.

²⁷ Go.

²⁸ Sighed.

²⁹ Depart.

³⁰ Provide him with.

³¹ Agreeing together.

³² Pleasure.

³³ Came very near the truth.

And with attendance, and with business
 Be we y-liméd,¹ bothē more and less.
 And some men said that we do love the best
 For to be free, and do right as us lest,²
 And that no man reprove us of our vice,
 But say that we are wise, and nothing nice,³
 For truly there is none among us all,
 If any wight will claw us on the gall,⁴
 That will not kick, for that he saith us sooth:
 Assay,⁵ and he shall find it, that so do'th.
 For be we never so vicious within,
 We will be held both wise and clean of sin.
 And some men said, that great delight have we
 For to be held stable and eke secré,⁶
 And in one purpose steadfastly to dwell,
 And not bewray a thing that men us tell.
 But that tale is not worth a rakē-stele.⁷
 Pardie, we women cannē nothing hele,⁸
 Witness on Midas; will ye hear the tale?
 Ovid, amongēs other thingēs smale,⁹
 Saith, Midas had, under his longē hairs,
 Growing upon his head two aas's ears;
 The whichē vice he hid, as best he might,
 Full subtly from every man's sight,
 That, save his wife, there knew of it no mo';
 He lov'd her most, and trusted her also;
 He prayed her, that to no creature
 She wouldē tellen of his disfigure.¹⁰
 She swore him, nay, for all the world to win,
 She would not do that villainy or sin,
 To make her husband have so foul a name:
 She would not tell it for her owen shame.
 But natheless her thoughtē that she died,
 That she so longē should a counsel hide;
 Her thought it swell'd so sore about her heart,
 That needēs must some word from her astart;
 And, since she durst not tell it unto man,
 Down to a marish fast thereby she ran,
 Till she came there, her heart was all afire:
 And, as a bittern bumbles¹¹ in the mire,
 She laid her mouth unto the water down.
 "Bewray me not, thou water, with thy soun',"¹²
 Quoth she, "to thee I tell it, and no mo',
 Mine husband hath long aas's earēs two!
 Now is mine heart all whole; now is it out;
 I might no longer keep it, out of doubt."
 Here may ye see, though we a time abide,
 Yet out it must, we can no counsel hide.
 The remnant of the tale, if ye will hear,
 Read in Ovid, and there ye may it lear.¹³

This knight, of whom my tale is specially,
 When that he saw he might not come thereby,—
 That is to say, what women love the most,—
 Within his breast full sorrowful was his ghost.¹⁴
 But home he went, for he might not sojourn,
 The day was come, that homeward he must turn.
 And in his way it happen'd him to ride,
 In all his care,¹⁵ under a forest side,

Where as he saw upon a dancē go
 Of ladies four-and-twenty, and yet mo'.
 Toward this ilkē¹⁶ dance he drew full yern,¹⁷
 In hope that he some wisdom there should learn;
 But certainly, ere he came fully there,
 Y-vanish'd was this dance, he knew not where;
 No creaturē saw he that bare life,
 Save on the green he sitting saw a wife,—
 A fouler wight there may no man devise.¹⁸
 Against¹⁹ this knight this old wife gan to rise,
 And said, "Sir Knight, hereforth²⁰ lieth no way.
 Tell me what ye are seeking, by your fay.²¹
 Paraventure it may the better be:
 These oldē folk know muchē thing," quoth she.
 "My levē²² mother," quoth this knight, "cer-
 tain,
 I am but dead, but if²³ that I can sayn
 What thing it is that women most desire:
 Could ye me wise,²⁴ I would well quite your
 hire."²⁵
 "Plight me thy troth here in mine hand,"
 quoth she,
 "The nextē thing that I require of thee
 Thou shalt it do, if it be in thy might,
 And I will tell it thee ere it be night."
 "Have here my trothē," quoth the knight; "I
 grant."
 "Thennē," quoth she, "I dare me well avaunt,²⁶
 Thy life is safe, for I will stand thereby,
 Upon my life the queen will say as I:
 Let see, which is the proudest of them all,
 That wears either a kerchief or a caul,
 That dare say nay to that I shall you teach.
 Let us go forth withoutē longer speech."
 Then rownd she a pistel²⁷ in his ear,
 And bade him to be glad, and have no fear.

When they were come unto the court, this
 knight
 Said, he had held his day, as he had hight,²⁸
 And ready was his answer, as he said.
 Full many a noble wife, and many a maid,
 And many a widow, for that they be wise,—
 The queen herself sitting as a justice,—
 Assembled be, his answer for to hear,
 And afterward this knight was bid appear.
 To every wight commanded was silēce,
 And that the knight should tell in audience,
 What thing that worldly women love the best.
 This knight he stood not still, as doth a beast,
 But to this question anon answer'd
 With manly voice, that all the court it heard,
 "My liegē lady, generally," quoth he,
 "Women desire to have the sovereignty
 As well over their husband as their love,
 And for to be in mast'ry him above.
 This is your most desire, though ye me kill,
 Do as you list, I am here at your will."
 In all the court there was no wife nor maid,

¹ Caught, as birds with lime.
² Pleases. ³ Foolish; French, "niais."
⁴ Fret the sore. Compare, "Let the galled jade
 wince."
⁵ Secret, good at keeping confidence.
⁷ Take-handle.
⁸ From Anglo-Saxon, "helean," to hide, conceal.
⁹ Small. ¹⁰ Deformity, disfigurement.
¹¹ Makes a humming noise.

¹² Sound. ¹³ Learn. ¹⁴ Spirit.
¹⁵ Trouble, anxiety. ¹⁶ Same.
¹⁷ Eagerly; German, "gern."
¹⁸ To meet. ¹⁹ Imagine, tell.
²⁰ Forth from hence.
²¹ Faith. ²² Dear. ²³ Unless.
²⁴ Instruct; German, "weisen," to show or counsel.
²⁵ Pay your reward. ²⁶ Boast, affirm.
²⁷ Whispered a secret, a lesson.
²⁸ Promised.

Nor widow, that contraried what he said,
But said, he worthy was to have his life.
And with that word up start that oldē wife
Which that the knight saw sitting on the green.
"Mercy," quoth she, "my sovereign lady queen,
Ere that your court departē, do me right.
I taughtē this answeŕ unto this knight,
For which he plighted me his trothē there,
The firstē thing I would of him requere,
He would it do, if it lay in his might.
Before this court then pray I thee, Sir Knight,"
Quoth she, "that thou me take unto thy wife,
For well thou know'st that I have kept¹ thy
life.

If I say false, say nay, upon thy fay."²
This knight answeŕ'd, "Alas, and well-away!
I know right well that such was my behest."³
For Goddē's lovē choose a new request:
Take all my good, and let my body go."
"Nay, then," quoth she, "I shrew⁴ us bothē
two,

For though that I be old, and foul, and poor,
I n'ould⁵ for all the metal nor the ore,
That under earth is grave,⁶ or lies above,
But if thy wife I were and eke thy love."
"My love?" quoth he, "nay, my damnatiōn,
Alas! that any of my natiōn
Should ever so foul disparaged be."
But all for nought; the end is this, that he
Constrained was, that needs he must her wed,
And take this oldē wife, and go to bed.

Now wouldē some men say paraventure,⁷
That for my negligence I do no cure⁸
To tell you all the joy and all th' array
That at the feast was made that ilkē⁹ day.
To which thing shortly answeren I shall:
I say there was no joy nor feast at all,
There was but heaviness and muchē sorrow:
For privily he wed her on the morrow;
And all day after hid him as an owl,
So woe was him, his wifē look'd so foul.
Great was the woe the knight had in his thought
When he was with his wife to bed y-brought;
He wallow'd, and he turned to and fro.
This oldē wife lay smiling evermo',
And said, "Dear husband, *benedicite*,
Fares every knight thus with his wife as ye?
Is this the law of king Arthourē's house?
Is every knight of his thus dangerous?"¹⁰
I am your owen love, and eke your wife,
I am she, which that saved hath your life,
And certes yet did I you ne'er unright.
Why fare ye thus with me this firstē night?
Ye farē like a man had lost his wit.
What is my guilt? for God's love tell me it,
And it shall be amended, if I may."
"Amended!" quoth this knight; "alas! nay,
nay,

It will not be amended, never mo';
Thou art so loathly, and so old also,

¹ Preserved. ² Faith. ³ Promise.
⁴ Curse. ⁵ Would not. ⁶ Buried.
⁷ Perhaps. ⁸ Take no pains. ⁹ Same.
¹⁰ Fastidious, niggardly. ¹¹ In addition.
¹² Writhe, turn about. ¹³ Burst.
¹⁴ If you could conduct yourself well towards me.
¹⁵ Is only to be despised. See note 17, page 19.

And thereto¹¹ comest of so low a kind,
That little wonder though I wallow and wind;¹²
So wouldē God, mine heartē wouldē brest!"¹³
"Is this," quoth she, "the cause of your
unrest?"

"Yea, certainly," quoth he; "no wonder is."
"Now, Sir," quoth she, "I could amend all
this,

If that me list, ere it were dayēs three,
So well ye mightē bear you unto me."¹⁴
But, for ye speaken of such gentleness
As is descended out of old richēs,
That therefore shallē ye be gentlemen;
Such arrogancy is not worth a hen.¹⁵
Look who that is most virtuous alway,
Prive and apert,¹⁶ and most intendeth aye
To do the gentle deedēs that he can;
And take him for the greatest gentleman.
Christ will,¹⁷ we claim of him our gentleness,
Not of our elders¹⁸ for their old richēs.
For though they gave us all their heritage,
For which we claim to be of high parage,¹⁹
Yet may they not bequeathē, for no thing,
To none of us, their virtuous living
That made them gentlemen called to be,
And bade us follow them in such degree.
Well can the wisē poet of Florence,
That hightē Dante, speak of this sentēce:²⁰
Lo, in such manner²¹ rhyme is Dante's tale.
'Full seld' uprieth by his branches smale
Prowess of man, for God of his goodness
Wills that we claim of him our gentleness;²²
For of our elders may we nothing claim
But temp'ral things that man may hurt and maim.
Eke every wight knows this as well as I,
If gentleness were planted naturally
Unto a certain lineage down the line,
Prive and apert, then would they never fine²³
To do of gentleness the fair office;
Then might they do no villainy nor vice.
Take fire, and bear it to the darkest house
Betwixt this and the mount of Caucasus,
And let men shut the doorēs, and go thenne,²⁴
Yet will the fire as fair and lightē brenne²⁵
As twenty thousand men might it behold;
Its office natural aye will it hold,²⁶
On peril of my life,—till that it die.
Here may ye see well how that gentry²⁷
Is not annexed to possession,
Since folk do not their operatiōn
Alway, as doth the fire, lo, in its kind.²⁸
For, God it wot, men may full often find
A lordē's son do shame and villainy.
And he that will have price²⁹ of his gent'ry,
For³⁰ he was boren of a gentle house,
And had his elders noble and virtuous,
And will himselfē do no gentle deedēs,
Nor follow his gentle ancestry, that dead is,
He is not gentle, be he duke or earl;
For villain sinful deedēs make a churl.

¹⁶ In private and in public. ¹⁷ Wills, requires.
¹⁸ Ancestors. ¹⁹ Birth, descent. ²⁰ Sentiment.
²¹ Kind of. ²² Dante, "Purgatorio," vii. 121.
²³ Cease. ²⁴ Thence. ²⁵ Burn.
²⁶ It will perform its natural function.
²⁷ Gentility, nobility. ²⁸ From its very nature.
²⁹ Esteem, honour. ³⁰ Because.

For gentleness is but the renomée¹
 Of thine ancéstore, for their high bounté,²
 Which is a strangē thing to thy persón :
 Thy gentleness cometh from God alone.
 Then comes our very³ gentleness of grace ;
 It was no thing bequeath'd us with our place.
 Think how noble, as saith Valerius,
 Was thilkē⁴ Tullius Hostilius,
 That out of povert' rose to high nobless.
 Read in Senec, and read eke in Boece,
 There shall ye see express, that it no drede⁵ is,
 That he is gentle that doth gentle deedēs.
 And therefore, levē⁶ husband, I conclude,
 Albeit that mine ancestors were rude,
 Yet may the highē God,—and so hope I,—
 Grant me His grace to live virtuously :
 Then am I gentle, when that I begin
 To live virtuously, and waivē⁷ sin.

"And whereas ye of povert' me reprove,⁸
 The highē God, on whom that we believe,
 In wilful povert' chose to lead his life :
 And certes, every man, maiden, or wife
 May understand that Jesus, heaven's king,
 Ne would not choose a vicious living.
 Glad povert'⁹ is an honest thing, certáin ;
 This will Senec and other clerkēs¹⁰ sayn.
 Whoso that holds him paid of¹¹ his povért',
 I hold him rich, though he had not a shirt.
 He that covéteth is a poorē wight,
 For he would have what is not in his might.
 But he that nought hath, nor covéteth t' have,
 Is rich, although ye hold him but a knave.¹²
 Very povért' is sinnē, properly.¹³
 Juvenal saith of povert' merrily :
 The poorē man, when he goes by the way,
 Before the thievēs he may sing and play.¹⁴
 Povért' is hateful good ;¹⁵ and, as I guess,
 A full great bringer out of business ;¹⁶
 A great amender eke of sapience
 To him that taketh it in patience.
 Povert' is this, although it seem elenge,¹⁷
 Possession that no wight will challenge.
 Povert' full often, when a man is low,
 Makes him his God and eke himself to know :
 Povert' a spectacle is,¹⁸ as thinketh me,
 Through which he may his very³ friendēs see.
 And, therefore, Sir, since that I you not grieve,
 Of my povert' no morē me reprove.

"Now, Sir, of eldē¹⁹ ye reprovē me :
 And certes, Sir, though none authority²⁰
 Were in no book, ye gentles of honoúr
 Say, that men should an oldē wight honoúr,
 And call him father, for your gentleness ;
 And authors shall I finden, as I guess.

Now there ye say that I am foul and old,
 Then dread ye not to be a cokēwold.²¹
 For filth, and eldē, all so may I thé,²²
 Be greatē wardens upon chastity.
 But natheless, since I know your delight,
 I shall fulfil your worldly appetite.
 Choose now," quoth she, "one of these thingēs
 tway,

To have me foul and old till that I dey,²³
 And be to you a truē humble wife,
 And never you displease in all my life :
 Or elles will ye have me young and fair,
 And take your áventure of the repair²⁴
 That shall be to your house because of me,—
 Or in some other place, it may well be?
 Now choose yourselfē whether that you liketh."

This knight adviseth²⁵ him, and sore he siketh,²⁶
 But at the last he said in this mannere ;
 "My lady and my love, and wife so dear,
 I put me in your wisē governance,
 Choose for yourself which may be most pleasance
 And most honoúr to you and me also ;
 I do no force²⁷ the whether of the two :
 For as you liketh, it suffioeth me."
 "Then have I got the mastery," quoth she,
 "Since I may choose and govern as me lest."²⁸
 "Yea, certes, wife," quoth he, "I hold it best."
 "Kiss me," quoth she, "we are no longer
 wroth,²⁹

For by my troth I will be to you both ;
 This is to say, yea, bothē fair and good.
 I pray to God that I may stervē wood,³⁰
 But³¹ I to you be all so good and true,
 As ever was wife, since the world was new ;
 And but³¹ I be to-morrow as fair to seen,
 As any lady, emperess, or queen,
 That is betwixt the East and eke the West,
 Do with my life and death right as you lest.³²
 Cast up the curtain, and look how it is."

And when the knight saw verily all this,
 That she so fair was, and so young thereto,
 For joy he hent³³ her in his armēs two :
 His heartē bathed in a bath of bliss,
 A thousand times on row³⁴ he gan her kiss :
 And she obeyed him in every thing
 That mightē do him pleasance or liking.
 And thus they live unto their livēs' end
 In perfect joy ; and Jesus Christ us send
 Husbandēs meek and young, and fresh in bed,
 And grace to overlive them that we wed.
 And eke I pray Jesus to short their lives,
 That will not be govēred by their wives.
 And old and angry niggards of dispence,³⁴
 God send them soon a very pestilence !

¹ French, "renommée," renown.

² Goodness, worth.

³ True.

⁴ That.

⁵ Doubt.

⁶ Dear.

⁷ Forsake.

⁸ Reproach.

⁹ Poverty endured with contentment.

¹⁰ Scholars.

¹¹ Holds himself satisfied with, is content with.

¹² A slave, abject wretch.

¹³ Properly, the only true poverty is sin.

¹⁴ "Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator."—"Sa-tires," x. 22.

¹⁵ In a fabulous conference between the Emperor Adrian and the philosopher Secundus, reported by Vincent of Beauvais, occurs the passage which Chaucer

here paraphrases:—"Quid est Paupertas? Odibile bonum; sanitatis mater; remotio curarum; sapientie reperitrix; negotium sine damno; possessio absque calumnia; sine sollicitudine felicitas."

¹⁶ Deliverer from care and trouble.

¹⁷ Strange; from French, "eloigner," to remove.

¹⁸ Is a spying-glass, pair of spectacles.

¹⁹ Age.

²⁰ Text, dictum.

²¹ Thrive.

²² Die.

²³ Considered.

²⁴ Set no value, care not.

²⁵ At variance.

²⁶ Die mad.

²⁷ Took.

²⁸ Grudgers of expense.

²⁹ Cuckold.

³⁰ Resort.

³¹ Sighed.

³² Pleases.

³³ Unless.

³⁴ In succession.

THE FRIAR'S TALE.¹

THE PROLOGUE.

THIS worthy limitour, this noble Frere,
He made always a manner luring cheer²
Upon the Sompnour; but for honesty³
No villain word as yet to him spake he:
But at the last he said unto the Wife:
"Damē," quoth he, "God give you right good
life,

Ye have here touched, all so may I thé,⁴
In school matter a greatē difficulty.
Ye have said muchē thing right well, I say;
But, Damē, here as we ride by the way,
Us needeth not but for to speak of game,
And leave authorities, in Goddē's name,
To preaching, and to school eke of clergy.
But if it like unto this company,
I will you of a Sompnour tell a game;
Pardie, ye may well knowē by the name,
That of a Sompnour may no good be said;
I pray that none of you be evil paid;⁵
A Sompnour is a runner up and down
With mandements⁶ for fornicatioun,
And is y-beat at every townē's end."
Then spake our Host; "Ah, Sir, ye should be
hend⁷

And courteous, as a man of your estate;
In company we will have no debate:
Tell us your tale, and let the Sompnour be."
"Nay," quoth the Sompnour, "let him say by
me

What so him list; when it comes to my lot,
By God, I shall him quiten⁸ every groat!
I shall him tellē what a great honour
It is to be a flattering limitour,
And his office I shall him tell y-wis."⁹
Our Host answered, "Peace, no more of this."
And afterward he said unto the Frere,
"Tell forth your tale, mine owen master dear."

THE TALE.

Whilom¹⁰ there was dwelling in my country
An archdeacon, a man of high degree,
That boldēly did executioun,
In punishing of fornicatioun,
Of witchcraft, and eke of bawdery,
Of defamation, and adultery,
Of churchē-reevēs,¹¹ and of testaments,
Of contracts, and of lack of sacraments,

¹ On the Tale of the Friar, and that of the Sompnour which follows, Tyrwhitt has remarked that they "are well engrafted upon that of the Wife of Bath. The ill-humour which shows itself between those two characters is quite natural, as no two professions at that time were at more constant variance. The regular clergy, and particularly the mendicant friars, affected a total exemption from all ecclesiastical jurisdiction, except that of the Pope, which made them exceedingly obnoxious to the bishops, and of course to all the inferior officers of the national hierarchy." Both tales, whatever their origin, are bitter satires on the greed and worldliness of the Romish clergy.

² A kind of gloomy countenance.

³ Good manners.

⁴ Thrive.

⁵ Dissatisfied.

And eke of many another manner¹² crime,
Which needeth not rehearse at this time,
Of usury, and simony also;
But, certes, lechours did he greatest woe;
They shouldē singen, if that they were hent;¹³
And smallē tithers¹⁴ werē foul y-shent,¹⁵
If any person would on them complain;
There might astert them no pecunial pain.¹⁶
For smallē tithēs, and small offering,
He made the people piteously to sing;
For ere the bishop caught them with his crook,
They weren in the archēdeacon's book;
Then had he, through his jurisdictioun,
Power to do on them correction.

He had a Sompnour ready to his hand,
A slier boy was none in Engleland;
For subtilly he had his espaille,¹⁷
That taught him well where it might aught
avail.

He couldē spare of lechours one or two,
To teachē him to four and twenty mo'.
For,—though this Sompnour wood¹⁸ be as a
hare,—

To tell his harlotry I will not spare,
For we be out of their correction,
They have of us no jurisdictioun,
Ne never shall have, term of all their lives.

"Peter, so be the women of the stives,"¹⁹
Quoth this Sompnour, "y-put out of our
cure."²⁰

"Peace, with mischance and with misaven-
ture,"

Our Hostē said, "and let him tell his tale.
Now tellē forth, and let the Sompnour gale,²¹
Nor sparē not, mine owen master dear."

This falsē thief, the Sompnour (quoth the
Frere),

Had always bawdēs ready to his hand,
As any hawk to lure in Engleland,
That told him all the secrets that they knew,—
For their acquaintance was not come of new;
They werē his approvers²² privily.

He took himself a great profit thereby:
His master knew not always what he wan.²³

Withoutē mandement, a lewēd²⁴ man
He could summon, on pain of Christē's curse,

And they were inly glad to fill his purse,
And make him greatē feastēs at the nale.²⁵

And right as Judas haddē purses smale,²⁶
And was a thief, right such a thief was he,

His master had but half his duēty.²⁷

He was (if I shall givē him his laud)

A thief, and eke a Sompnour, and a bawd.

And he had wenches at his retinue,

⁶ Mandates, summonses.

⁷ Civil, gentle.

⁸ Pay him off.

⁹ Assuredly.

¹⁰ Once on a time.

¹¹ Churchwardens.

¹² Sort of.

¹³ Caught.

¹⁴ People who did not pay their full tithes. Mr Wright remarks that "the sermons of the friars in the fourteenth century were most frequently designed to impress the absolute duty of paying full tithes and offerings."

¹⁵ Troubled, put to shame.

¹⁶ They got off with no mere pecuniary punishment.

¹⁷ Espionage.

¹⁸ Furious, mad.

¹⁹ Stews.

²⁰ Care.

²¹ Whistle; bawl.

²² Informers.

²³ Won.

²⁴ Ignorant.

²⁵ Ale-house; inn-ale, a house for ale.

²⁶ Small.

²⁷ What was owing him.

That whether that Sir Robert or Sir Hugh,
Or Jack, or Ralph, or whoso that it were
That lay by them, they told it in his ear.
Thus were the wench and he of one assent;
And he would fetch a feigned mandement,
And to the chapter summon them both two,
And pill¹ the man, and let the wench² go.
Then would he say, "Friend, I shall for thy sake
Do strike thee³ out of our⁴ letters blake;⁵
Thee thar⁶ no more as in this case travail;
I am thy friend where I may thee avail."
Certain he knew of bribers many mo'
Than possible is to tell in year⁷s two:
For in this world is no dog for the bow,⁸
That can a hurt deer from a whol⁹e know,
Bet¹⁰ than this Sompnour knew a sly lechour,
Or an adult¹¹rer, or a paramour:
And, for that was the fruit of all his rent,
Therefore on it he set all his intent.

And so befell, that once upon a day
This Sompnour, waiting ever on his prey,
Rode forth to summon a widow, an old ribibe,⁷
Feigning a cause, for he would have a bribe.
And happen'd that he saw before him ride
A gay yeoman under a forest side:
A bow he bare, and arrows bright and keen,
He had upon a courtepy⁸ of green,
A hat upon his head with fringes blake.
"Sir," quoth this Sompnour, "hail, and well
o'ertake."

"Welcome," quoth he, "and every good fel-
law;
Whither ridest thou under this green shaw?"⁹
Said¹⁰ this yeoman; "wilt thou far to-day?"
This Sompnour answer'd him, and said¹¹,
"Nay."

Here fast¹² by," quoth he, "is mine intent
To rid¹³e, for to raisen up a rent,
That longeth to my lord¹⁴'s duety."
"Ah! art thou then a bailiff?" "Yea," quoth
he.

He durst¹⁵ not for very filth and shame
Say that he was a Sompnour, for the name.
"De par dieux,"¹⁶ quoth this yeoman, "lev¹⁷e¹⁸
brother,

Thou art a bailiff, and I am another.
I am unknown, as in this country.
Of thine acquaintance I will pray¹⁹e thee,
And eke of brotherhood, if that thee list.²⁰
I have gold and silver lying in my chest;
If that thee hap to come into our shire,
All shall be thine, right as thou wilt desire."
"Grand mercy,"²¹ quoth this Sompnour, "by
my faith."

Each in the other's hand his troth²²e lay'th,
For to be sworn²³e brethren till they dey.²⁴
In dalliance they rid²⁵e forth and play.

¹ Plunder, pluck.

² Cause thee to be struck.

³ Black.

⁴ It is needful.

⁵ Dog attending a huntsman with bow and arrow.

⁶ Better.

⁷ The name of a musical instrument; applied to an old woman because of the shrillness of her voice.

⁸ Wore a short doublet.

⁹ Shade.

¹⁰ By the gods.

¹¹ Dear.

¹² Please.

¹³ Great thanks.

¹⁴ Die. See note 17, page 28.

This Sompnour, which that was as full of
jangles,¹⁵

As full of venom be those wariangles,¹⁶

And ev'r inquiring upon every thing,

"Brother," quoth he, "where is now your
dwelling,

Another day if that I should you seech?"¹⁷

This yeoman him answered in soft speech;

"Brother," quoth he, "far in the North
country,"¹⁸

Where as I hope some time I shall thee see.

Ere we depart I shall thee so well wiss,¹⁹

That of mine hous²⁰e shalt thou never miss."

"Now, brother," quoth this Sompnour, "I you
pray,

Teach me, while that we rid²¹e by the way,

(Since that ye be a bailiff as am I,)

Some subtilty, and tell me faithfully

In mine office how that I most may win.

And spar²²e not²³ for conscience or for sin,

But, as my brother, tell me how do ye."

"Now by my troth²⁴e, brother mine," said
he,

"As I shall tell to thee a faithful tale:

My wages be full strait and eke full smale;

My lord is hard to me and dangerous,²⁵

And mine office is full laborious;

And therefore by extortio²⁶n I live,

Forsooth I take all that men will me give.

Algate²⁷ by sleight²⁸e, or by violence,

From year to year I win all my dispen²⁹ce;

I can no better tell thee faithfully."

"Now certes," quoth this Sompnour, "so
fare³⁰ I;

I spar³¹e not to tak³²e, God it wot,

But if³³ it be too heavy or too hot.

What I may get in counsel privily,

No manner conscience of that have I.

N'ere³⁴ mine extortio³⁵n, I might not live,

Nor of such jap³⁶es³⁷ will I not be shrive.³⁸

Stomach nor conscienc³⁹e know I none;

I shrew⁴⁰ these shrift⁴¹e-fathers⁴² every one.

Well be we met, by God and by St Jame.

But, lev⁴³e brother, tell me then thy name,"

Quoth this Sompnour. Right in this mean⁴⁴e
while

This yeoman gan a little for to smile.

"Brother," quoth he, "wilt thou that I thee
tell?

I am a fiend, my dwelling is in hell,

And here I ride about my purchasing,

To know where men will give me any thing.

My purchase is th' effect of all my rent.⁴⁵

Look how thou ridest for the same intent

To winn⁴⁶e good, thou reckest never how,

Right so fare I, for rid⁴⁷e will I now

Unto the world⁴⁸e's end⁴⁹e for a prey."

¹⁵ Chattering.

¹⁶ Butcher-birds; which are very noisy and ravenous, and tear in pieces the birds on which they prey; the thorn on which they do this was said to become poisonous.

¹⁷ Seek, visit.

¹⁸ Medieval legends located hell in the North.

¹⁹ Inform.

²⁰ Conceal nothing from me.

²¹ Niggardly.

²² Whether.

²³ Do.

²⁴ Unless.

²⁵ Were it not for.

²⁶ Tricks.

²⁷ Confessed, shriven.

²⁸ Curse.

²⁹ Confessors.

³⁰ What I can gain is my sole revenue.

"Ah," quoth this Sompnour, "*benedicite!*
what say y'?

I weened¹ ye were a yeoman truly.

Ye have a mannē's shape as well as I.

Have ye then a figure determinate

In hellē, where ye be in your estate?"²

"Nay, certainly," quoth he, "there have we none,

But when us liketh we can take us one.

Or ellēs make you seem³ that we be shape

Sometimē like a man, or like an ape;

Or like an angel can I ride or go;

It is no wondrous thing though it be so,

A lousy juggler can deceivē thee,

And, pardie, yet can⁴ I more craft⁵ than he."

"Why," quoth the Sompnour, "ride ye then or gon

In sundry shapes, and not always in one?"

"For we," quoth he, "will us in such form make,

As most is able our prey for to take."

"What maketh you to have all this laboúr?"

"Full many a causē, levē Sir Sompnoúr,"

Seidē this fiend. "But all thing hath a time;

The day is short, and it is passed prime,

And yet have I won nothing in this day;

I will intend⁶ to winning, if I may,

And not intend our thingēs to declare:

For, brother mine, thy wit is all too bare

To understand, although I told them thee.

But for⁷ thou askest, why laboúré we:

For sometimes we be Goddē's instruments

And meanēs to do his commandēments,

When that him list, upon his creatures,

In divers acts and in divers figúres:

Withoutē him we have no might, certain,

If that him list to standē thereagain.⁸

And sometimes, at our prayer, have we leave

Only the body, not the soul, to grieve:

Witness on Job, whom that we did full woe.

And sometimes have we might on both the two,—

This is to say, on soul and body eke.

And sometimes be we suffer'd for to seek

Upon a man, and do his soul unrest

And not his body, and all is for the best.

When he withstandeth our temptatiún,

It is a cause of his salvatiún,

Albeit that it was not our intent

He should be safe, but that we would him hent.⁹

And sometimes be we servants unto man,

As to the archibishop Saint Dunstan,

And to th' apostle servant eke was I."

"Yet tell me," quoth this Sompnour, "faithfully,

Make ye you newē bodies thus alway

Of th' elements?" The fiend answered, "Nay:

Sometimes we feign, and sometimes we arise

With deadē bodies, in full sundry wise,

And speak as reas'nably, and fair, and well,

As to the Pythoness¹⁰ did Samuel:

And yet will some men say it was not he.

I do no force of¹¹ your divinity.

But one thing warn I thee, I will not jape,¹²

Thou wilt algatēs¹³ weet¹⁴ how we be shape:

Thou shalt hereafterward, my brother dear,

Come, where thee needeth not of me to lear.¹⁵

For thou shalt by thine own experience

Conne in a chair to rede of this sentēce,¹⁶

Better than Virgil, while he was alive,

Or Dante also.¹⁷ Now let us ride blive,¹⁸

For I will holdē company with thee,

Till it be so that thou forsakē me."

"Nay," quoth this Sompnour, "that shall ne'er betide.

I am a yeoman, that is known full wide;

My trothē will I hold, as in this case;

For though thou wert the devil Satanas,

My trothē will I hold to thee, my brother,

As I have sworn, and each of us to other,

For to be truē brethren in this case,

And both we go abouten our purchase.¹⁹

Take thou thy part, what that men will thee give,

And I shall mine, thus may we bothē live.

And if that any of us have more than other,

Let him be true, and part it with his brother."

"I grantē," quoth the devil, "by my fay."

And with that word they rodē forth their way,

And right at th' ent'ring of the townē's end,

To which this Sompnour shope²⁰ him for to wend,²¹

They saw a cart, that charged was with hay,

Which that a carter drove forth on his way.

Deep was the way, for which the cartē stood:

The carter smote, and cried as he were wood,²²

"Heit Scot! heit Brok! what, spare ye for the stones?

The fiend (quoth he) you fetch body and bones,

As farforthly²³ as ever ye were foal'd,

So muchē woe as I have with you tholed.²⁴

The devil have all, horses, and cart, and hay."

The Sompnour said, "Here shall we have a prey;"

And near the fiend he drew, as nought ne were,²⁵

Full privily, and rowned²⁶ in his ear:

"Hearken, my brother, hearken, by thy faith,

Hearest thou not, how that the carter saith?

Hent²⁷ it anon, for he hath giv'n it thee,

Both hay and cart, and eke his capels²⁸ three."

"Nay," quoth the devil, "God wot, never a deal,²⁹

It is not his intent, trust thou me well;

¹ Thought. ² At home; in your natural state.

³ Make it seem to you. ⁴ Know.

⁵ Skill, cunning. ⁶ Apply myself.

⁷ Because. ⁸ Against it. ⁹ Catch.

¹⁰ The witch, or woman, possessed with a prophesying spirit; from the Greek, *Πυθία*. Chaucer of course refers to the raising of Samuel's spirit by the Witch of Endor.

¹¹ Set no value upon.

¹² Jest.

¹³ Assuredly.

¹⁴ Know.

¹⁵ Learn.

¹⁶ Learn to understand what I have said.

¹⁷ Both poets who had in fancy visited hell.

¹⁸ Briskly.

¹⁹ Seeking what we may pick up.

²⁰ Shaped, resolved.

²¹ Go.

²² Mad.

²³ As sure.

²⁴ Suffered, endured; "thole" is still used in Scotland in the same sense.

²⁵ As if nothing were the matter.

²⁶ Whispered.

²⁷ Seize.

²⁸ Horses.

²⁹ Whit.

Ask him thyself, if thou not trowest¹ me,
Or ellës stint² a while and thou shalt see."
The carter thwack'd his horses on the croup,
And they began to drawen and to stoop.
"Heit now," quoth he; "there, Jesus Christ
you bless,
And all his handiwork, both more and less!
That was well twight,³ mine owen liart,⁴ boy,
I pray God save thy body, and Saint Loy!
Now is my cart out of the slough, pardie."
"Lo, brother," quoth the fiend, "what told I
thee?

Here may ye see, mine owen dearë brother,
The churl spake one thing, but he thought
another.

Let us go forth abouten our voyage;
Here win I nothing upon this carriâge."

When that they came somewhat out of the
town,

This Sompnour to his brother gan to rown;

"Brother," quoth he, "here wona⁵ an old
rebeck,⁶

That had almost as lief to lose her neck.

As for to give a penny of her good.

I will have twelvenpence, though that she be
wood,⁷

Or I will summon her to our office;

And yet, God wot, of her know I no vice.

But for thou canst not, as in this country,

Winnë thy cost, take here example of me."

This Sompnour clapped at the widow's gate:

"Come out," he said, "thou oldë very trate;⁸

I trow thou hast some friar or priest with thee."

"Who clappeth?" said this wife; "ben'dicite,
God save you, Sir, what is your sweetë will?"

"I have," quoth he, "of summons here a bill.

Up⁹ pain of cursing, lookë that thou be

To-morrow before our archdeacon's knee,

To answer to the court of certain things."

"Now Lord," quoth she, "Christ Jesus, king
of kings,

So wisly¹⁰ helpë me, as I not may.¹¹

I have been sick, and that full many a day.

I may not go so far," quoth she, "nor ride,

But I be dead, so pricketh¹² it my side.

May I not ask a libel, Sir Sompnour,

And answer there by my procuratour

To such thing as men would apposë¹³ me?"

"Yes," quoth this Sompnour, "pay anon, let
see,

Twelvenpence to me, and I will thee acquit.

I shall no profit have thereby but lit.¹⁴

My master hath the profit and not I.

Come off, and let me ridë hastily;

Give me twelvenpence, I may no longer tarry."

"Twelvenpence!" quoth she; "now lady
Saintë Mary

So wisly¹⁰ help me out of care and sin,

This widë world though that I should it win,
Ne have I not twelvenpence within my hold.

Ye know full well that I am poor and old;

Kithë your almës¹⁵ upon me poor wretch."

"Nay then," quoth he, "the foulë fiend me
fetch,

If I excuse thee, though thou should'st be
spilt."¹⁶

"Alas!" quoth she, "God wot, I have no
guilt."

"Pay me," quoth he, "or, by the sweet Saint
Anne,

As I will bear away thy newë pan

For debtë, which thou owest me of old,—

When that thou madest thine husband cuck-
old,—

I paid at home for thy correction."

"Thou liest," quoth she, "by my salvatiön;

Never was I ere now, widow or wife,

Summon'd unto your court in all my life;

Nor never I was but of my body true.

Unto the devil rough and black of hue

Give I thy body and my pan also."

And when the devil heard her cursë so

Upon her knees, he said in this mannëre;

"Now, Mabily, mine owen mother dear,

Is this your will in earnest that ye say?"

"The devil," quoth she, "so fetch him ere he
day,¹⁷

And pan and all, but¹⁸ he will him repent."

"Nay, oldë stoat,¹⁹ that is not mine intent,"

Quoth this Sompnour, "for to repentë me

For any thing that I have had of thee;

I would I had thy smock and every cloth."

"Now, brother," quoth the devil, "be not
wroth;

Thy body and this pan be mine by right.

Thou shalt with me to hellë yet to-night,

Where thou shalt knowen of our privity²⁰

More than a master of divinity."

And with that word the foulë fiend him
hent.²¹

Body and soul, he with the devil went,

Where as the Sompnours have their heritage;

And God, that maked after his imäge

Mankindë, save and guide us all and some,

And let this Sompnour a good man become.

Lordings, I could have told you (quoth this
Frere),

Had I had leisure for this Sompnour here,

After the text of Christ, and Paul, and John,

And of our other doctors many a one,

Such painës, that your heartës might agrise,²²

Albeit so, that no tongue may devise,—²³

Though that I might a thousand winters tell,—

The pains of thilkë²⁴ cursed house of hell.

But for to keep us from that cursed place

Wake we, and pray we Jesus, of his grace,

who has trotted about much, or who moves with quick
short steps. ⁹ Upon. ¹⁰ Surely.

¹¹ Cannot help myself.

¹² Paineth.

¹³ Question me about, lay to my charge.

¹⁴ Little.

¹⁵ Show your charity.

¹⁶ Ruined, put to death.

¹⁷ Die.

¹⁸ Unless.

¹⁹ Polecat.

²⁰ Secrets.

²¹ Seized.

²² Frighten, horrify.

²³ Relate.

²⁴ That.

¹ Believest.

² Stop.

³ Pulled; for "twitched."

⁴ Gray; elsewhere applied by Chaucer to the hairs
of an old man. So Burns, in the "Cotter's Saturday
Night," speaks of the gray temples of "the sire"—"His
lyart haffets wearing thin and bare."

⁵ Dwells.

⁶ Used like "ribibe,"—as a nickname for a shrill
old scold.

⁷ Mad.

⁸ Trot; a contemptuous term for an old woman

So keep us from the tempter, Satanas.
 Harken this word, beware as in this case.
 The lion sits in his await¹ alway
 To slay the innocent, if that he may.
 Disposen aye your heartes to withstond
 The fiend, that would you makē thrall and bond;
 He may not temptē you over your might,
 For Christ will be your champion and your
 knight;
 And pray, that this our Sompnour him repent
 Of his misdeeds, ere that the fiend him hent.²

THE SOMPNOUR'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.

THIS Sompnour in his stirrups high he stood,
 Upon this Friar his heartē was so wood,³
 That like an aspen leaf he quoke⁴ for ire:
 "Lordings," quoth he, "but one thing I desire;
 I you beseech, that of your courtesy,
 Since ye have heard this falsē Friar lie,
 As suffer me I may my talē tell.
 This Friar boasteth that he knoweth hell,
 And, God it wot, that is but little wonder,
 Friars and fiends be but little asunder.
 For, pardie, ye have often time heard tell,
 How that a friar ravish'd was to hell
 In spirit onēs by a visioū,
 And, as an angel led him up and down,
 To shew him all the painēs that there were,
 In all the placē saw he not a frere;
 Of other folk he saw enough in woe.
 Unto the angel spake the friar tho;⁵
 'Now, Sir,' quoth he, 'have friars such a grace,
 That none of them shall come into this place?'
 'Yes,' quoth the angel, 'many a millioūn:'
 And unto Satanas he led him down.
 'And now hath Satanas,' said he, 'a tail
 Broader than of a carrack⁶ is the sail.
 Hold up thy tail, thou Satanas,' quoth he,
 'Shew forth thine erse, and let the friar see
 Where is the nest of friars in this place.'
 And less than half a furlong way of space,⁷
 Right so as bees swarman out of a hive,
 Out of the devil's erse there gan to drive
 A twenty thousand friars on a rout.⁸
 And throughout hell they swarmed all about,
 And came again, as fast as they may gon,
 And in his erse they creeped every one:

¹ On the watch; French, "aux aguets."

² Seize.

³ Furious.

⁴ Quaked, trembled.

⁵ Then.

⁶ A great ship of burden used by the Portuguese; the name is from the Italian, "cargare," to load.

⁷ Immediately.

⁸ In a company, crowd.

⁹ By his very nature.

¹⁰ The money given to the priests for performing thirty masses for the dead, either in succession or on the anniversaries of their death; also the masses themselves, which were very profitable to the clergy.

¹¹ The regular religious orders, who had lands and fixed revenues; while the friars, by their vows, had to depend on voluntary contributions, though their greed suggested many modes of evading the prescription.

¹² In Chaucer's day the most material notions about

He clapt his tail again, and lay full still.
 This friar, when he looked had his fill
 Upon the torments of that sorry place,
 His spirit God restored of his grace
 Into his body again, and he awoke;
 But natheless for fearē yet he quoke,
 So was the devil's erse aye in his mind;
 That is his heritage, of very kind.⁹
 God save you allē, save this cursed Frere;
 My prologue will I end in this mannere.

THE TALE.

Lordings, there is in Yorkshire, as I guess,
 A marshy country called Holderness,
 In which there went a limitour about
 To preach, and eke to beg, it is no doubt.
 And so befell that on a day this frere
 Had preached at a church in his mannere,
 And specially, above every thing,
 Excited he the people in his preaching
 To trentals,¹⁰ and to give, for Goddē's sake,
 Wherewith men mightē holy houses make,
 There as divinē service is honoū'd,
 Not there as it is wasted and devoū'd,
 Nor where it needeth not for to be given,
 As to possessioners,¹¹ that may liven,
 Thanked be God, in wealth and abundānce.
 "Trentals," said he, "deliver from penānce
 Their friendēs' soulēs, as well old as young,
 Yea, when that they be hastily y-sung,—
 Not for to hold a priest jolly and gay,
 He singeth not but one mass in a day.
 Deliver out," quoth he, "anon the souls.
 Full hard it is, with flesh-hook or with owls
 To be y-clawed, or to burn or bake:¹²
 Now speed you hastily, for Christē's sake."
 And when this friar had said all his intent,
 With *qui cum patre*¹³ forth his way he went,
 When folk in church had giv'n him what them
 lest;¹⁴
 He went his way, no longer would he rest,
 With scrip and tipped staff, y-tucked high:¹⁵
 In every house he gan to pore¹⁶ and pry,
 And begged meal and cheese, or ellēs corn.
 His fellow had a staff tipped with horn,
 A pair of tables¹⁷ all of ivory,
 And a pointel¹⁸ y-polish'd fetisly,¹⁹
 And wrote alway the namēs, as he stood,
 Of all the folk that gave them any good,
 Askauncē²⁰ that he wouldē for them pray.

the tortures of hell prevailed, and were made the most of by the clergy, who preyed on the affection and fear of the survivors, through the ingenious doctrine of purgatory. Old paintings and illuminations represent the dead as torn by hooks, roasted in fires, boiled in pots, and subjected to many other physical torments.

¹³ The closing words of the final benediction pronounced at mass.

¹⁴ Pleased.

¹⁵ With his gown tucked up high.

¹⁶ Peer, gaze curiously.

¹⁷ Writing tablets.

¹⁸ A style, or pencil.

¹⁹ Daintily.

²⁰ The word now means sideways or askint; here it means "as if;" and its force is probably to suggest that the second friar, with an ostentatious stealthiness, noted down the names of the liberal, to make them believe that they would be remembered in the holy beggars' orisons.

"Give us a bushel wheat, or malt, or rey,¹
 A Goddē's kichel,² or a trip³ of cheese,
 Or ellēs what you list, we may not chese;⁴
 A Goddē's halfpenny, or a mass penny;
 Or give us of your brawn, if ye have any;
 A dagon⁵ of your blanket, levē dame,
 Our sister dear,—lo, here I write your name,—
 Bacon or beef, or such thing as ye find."
 A sturdy harlot⁶ went them aye behind,
 That was their hostē's man, and bare a sack,
 And what men gave them, laid it on his back.
 And when that he was out at door, anon
 He planed away the namēs every one,
 That he before had written in his tables:
 He served them with nifies⁷ and with fables.—

"Nay, there thou liest, thou Sompnour,"
 quoth the Frere.

"Peace," quoth our Host, "for Christē's mother
 dear;

Tell forth thy tale, and spare it not at all."

"So thrive I," quoth this Sompnour, "so I
 shall."

So long he went from house to house, till he
 Came to a house, where he was wont to be
 Refreshed more than in a hundred places.
 Sick lay the husband man, whose that the
 place is,

Bedrid upon a couchē low he lay:

"*Deus hic*,"⁸ quoth he; "O Thomas friend,
 good day,"

Said this friar, all courteously and soft.

"Thomas," quoth he, "God yield it you,⁹ full
 oft

Have I upon this bench fared full well,
 Here have I eaten many a merry meal."

And from the bench he drove away the cat,
 And laid adown his potent¹⁰ and his hat,
 And eke his scrip, and sat himself adown:
 His fellow was y-walked into town
 Forth with his knave,¹¹ into that hostelry
 Where as he shopē¹² him that night to lie.

"O dearē master," quoth this sickē man,
 "How have ye fared since that March began?
 I saw you not this fortēnight and more."

"God wot," quoth he, "labour'd have I full sore;
 And specially for thy salvatiōn

Have I said many a precious orison,
 And for mine other friendēs, God them bless.

I have this day been at your church at mess,¹³
 And said sermōn after my simple wit,
 Not all after the text of Holy Writ;

For it is hard to you, as I suppose,
 And therefore will I teach you aye the glose.¹⁴

Glosing is a full glorious thing certāin,
 For letter slayeth, as we clerkēs¹⁵ sayn.

There have I taught them to be charitable,
 And spend their good where it is reasonable.

And there I saw our damē; where is she?"

"Yonder I trow that in the yard she be,"

¹ Rye.

² Little cake, given for God's sake.

³ Small piece.

⁴ Choose.

⁵ Slip, remnant.

⁶ Hired servant; from Anglo-Saxon, "hyran," to hire; the word was commonly applied to males.

⁷ Trifles, silly tales.

⁸ God be in this place; the formula of benediction at entering a house.

⁹ God recompense you therefor.

Saidē this man; "and she will come anon."

"Hey master, welcome be ye by Saint John,"
 Saidē this wife; "how fare ye heartily?"

This friar riseth up full courteously,
 And her embraceth in his armēs narrow,¹⁶
 And kiss'eth her sweet, and chirketh as a sparrow
 With his lippēs: "Damē," quoth he, "right
 well,

As he that is your servant every deal.¹⁷

Thanked be God, that gave you soul and life,
 Yet saw I not this day so fair a wife
 In all the churchē, God so savē me."

"Yea, God amend defaultē, Sir," quoth she;

"Algatēs¹⁸ welcome be ye, by my fay."

"Grand mercy, Dame; that have I found alway.

But of your greatē goodness, by your leave,
 I wouldē pray you that ye not you grieve,

I will with Thomas speak a little throw:¹⁹

These curates be so negligent and slow

To gropē tenderly a conscience.

In shrift²⁰ and preaching is my diligence

And study in Peter's wordēs and in Paul's;

I walk and fishē Christian mennē's souls,

To yield our Lord Jesus his proper rent;

To spread his word is allē mine intent."

"Now by your faith, O dearē Sir," quoth she,

"Chide him right well, for saintē charity.

He is aye angry as is a pismire,

Though that he have all that he can desire,

Though I him wrie²¹ at night, and make him
 warm,

And ov'r him lay my leg and eke mine arm,

He groaneth as our boar that lies in sty:

Other disport of him right none have I,

I may not please him in no manner case."²²

"O Thomas, *je vous dis*, Thomas, Thomas,

This maketh the fiend,²³ this must be amended.

Ire is a thing that high God hath defended,²⁴

And thereof will I speak a word or two."

"Now, master," quoth the wife, "ere that I
 go,

What will ye dine? I will go thereabout."

"Now, Damē," quoth he, "*je vous dis sans doute*,

Had I not of a capon but the liver,

And of your whitē bread not but a shiver,²⁵

And after that a roasted piggē's head,

(But I would that for me no beast were dead,))

Then had I with you homely suffisānce.

I am a man of little sustenānce.

My spirit hath its fost'ring in the Bible.

My body is aye so ready and penible²⁶

To wakē,²⁷ that my stomach is destroy'd.

I pray you, Dame, that ye be not annoy'd,

Though I so friendly you my counsel shew;

By God, I would have told it but to few."

"Now, Sir," quoth she, "but one word ere I
 go;

My child is dead within these weekēs two,

Soon after that ye went out of this town."

¹⁰ Staff; French, "potence," crutch, gibbet.

¹¹ Servant.

¹² Shaped; purposed.

¹³ Mass.

¹⁴ Comment, gloss.

¹⁵ Scholars.

¹⁶ Closely.

¹⁷ Whit.

¹⁸ Always.

¹⁹ A little while.

²⁰ Confession.

²¹ Cover.

²² By any sort of chance.

²³ This is the fiend's work.

²⁴ Forbidden.

²⁵ Thin slice.

²⁶ Painstaking.

²⁷ Watch.

"His death saw I by revelatioun,"
 Said this friar, "at home in our dortour.¹
 I dare well say, that less than half an hour
 After his death, I saw him borne to bliss
 In minē vision, so God me wiss.²
 So did our sexton, and our fermerere,³
 That have been truē friars fifty year,—
 They may now, God be thanked of his love,
 Makē their jubilee, and walk above.⁴
 And up I rose, and all our convent eke,
 With many a tearē trilling on my cheek,
 Withoutē noise or clattering of bells,
Te Deum was our song, and nothing else,
 Save that to Christ I bade an orison,
 Thanking him of my revelatioun.
 For, Sir and Damē, trustē me right well,
 Our orisons be more effectuel,
 And more we see of Christē's secret things,
 Than borel folk,⁵ although that they be kings.
 We live in povert', and in abstinence,
 And borel folk in riches and dispence
 Of meat and drink, and in their foul delight.
 We have this worldē's lust⁶ all in despight.⁷
 Lazar and Dives lived diversely,
 And diverse guerdon haddē they thereby.
 Whoso will pray, he must fast and be clean,
 And fat his soul, and keep his body lean.
 We fare as saith th' apostle; cloth⁸ and food
 Suffice us, although they be not full good.
 The cleanness and the fasting of us freres
 Maketh that Christ accepteth our prayēres.
 Lo, Moses forty days and forty night
 Fasted, ere that the high God full of might
 Spake with him in the mountain of Sinái:
 With empty womb of fasting many a day
 Received he the lawē, that was writ
 With Goddē's finger; and Eli,⁹ well ye wit,¹⁰
 In Mount Horeb, ere he had any speech
 With highē God, that is our livēs' leech,¹¹
 He fasted long, and was in contemplānce.
 Aaron, that had the temple in governānce,
 And eke the other priestēs every one,
 Into the temple when they shouldē gon
 To prayē for the people, and do service,
 They wouldē drinken in no manner wise
 No drinkē, which that night them drunken
 make,
 But there in abstinencē pray and wake,¹²
 Lest that they diēd: take heed what I say—
 But¹³ they be sober that for the people pray—
 Ware that, I say—no more: for it sufficeth.
 Our Lord Jesus, as Holy Writ deviseth,¹⁴
 Gave us example of fasting and prayēres:

¹ Dormitory; French, "dortoir."

² Direct.

³ Infirmary-keeper.

⁴ The rules of St Benedict granted peculiar honours and immunities to monks who had lived fifty years—the jubilee period—in the order. The usual reading of the words ending the two lines is "loan" or "lone," and "alone;" but to walk alone does not seem to have been any peculiar privilege of a friar, while the idea of precedence, or higher place at table and in processions, is suggested by the reading in the text.

⁵ Laymen, people who are not learned; "borel" was a kind of coarse cloth.

⁶ Pleasure.

⁷ Contempt.

⁸ Clothing.

⁹ Elijah (1 Kings, xix.)

¹⁰ Know.

¹¹ Physician, healer.

¹² Watch.

¹³ Unless.

¹⁴ Narrates.

¹⁵ Simple, lowly.

Therefore we mendicants, we sely¹⁵ freres,
 Be wedded to povert' and continence,
 To charity, humbles, and abstinence,
 To persecutioun for righteousness,
 To weeping, misericorde,¹⁶ and to cleanness.
 And therefore may ye see that our prayēres
 (I speak of us, we mendicants, we freres),
 Be to the highē God more acceptable
 Than yourēs, with your feastēs at your table.
 From Paradise first, if I shall not lie,
 Was man out chased for his gluttony,
 And chaste was man in Paradise certāin.
 But hark now, Thomas, what I shall thee sayn;
 I have no text of it, as I suppose,
 But I shall find it in a manner glose;¹⁷
 That specially our sweet Lord Jesus
 Spake this of friars, when he saidē thus,
 'Blessed be they that poor in spirit be.'
 And so forth all the gospel may ye see,
 Whether it be liker our professioun,
 Or theirs that swimmen in possessioun;
 Fy on their pomp, and on their gluttony,
 And on their lewēdness! I them defy.
 Me thinketh they be like Jovinian,¹⁸
 Fat as a whale, and walking as a swan;
 All vinolent as bottle in the spence;¹⁹
 Their prayer is of full great reverence;
 When they for soulēs say the Psalm of David,
 Lo, 'Buf' they say, *Cor meum eructavit*.²⁰
 Who follow Christē's gospel and his lore²¹
 But we, that humble be, and chaste, and pore,²²
 Workers of Goddē's word, not auditoürs?²³
 Therefore right as a hawk upon a sours²⁴
 Up springs into the air, right so prayēres
 Of charitable and chaste busy freres
 Makē their sours to Goddē's earēs two.
 Thomas, Thomas, so may I ride or go,
 And by that lord that called is Saint Ivo,
 N'ere thou our brother, shouldest thou not
 thrive;²⁵

In our chapiter pray we day and night
 To Christ, that he thee sendē health and might,
 Thy body for to wieldē hastily."²⁶

"God wot," quoth he, "nothing thereof feel
 I;

So help me Christ, as I in fewē years
 Have spendēd upon divers manner freres²⁷
 Full many a pound, yet fare I ne'er the bet;²⁸
 Certain my good have I almost beset:²⁹
 Farewell my gold, for it is all ago."³⁰

The friar answēr'd, "O Thomas, dost thou so?
 What needest thou diversē friars to seech?³¹
 What needeth him that hath a perfect leech,

¹⁶ Compassion."

¹⁷ A kind of comment.

¹⁸ An emperor Jovinian was famous in the mediæval legends for his pride and luxury.

¹⁹ Store-room.

²⁰ Literally, "My heart has belched forth;" in our translation, "My heart is inditing a goodly matter." (Ps. xiv. 1.) "Buf" is meant to represent the sound of an eructation, and to show the "great reverence" with which "those in possession," the monks of the rich monasteries, performed divine service.

²¹ Doctrine.

²² Poor.

²³ Hearers.

²⁴ Upon the "soar," or rise.

²⁵ If thou wert not of our brotherhood, thou shouldst have no hope of recovery.

²⁶ Soon to be able to move thy body freely.

²⁷ Friars of various sorts.

²⁸ Better.

²⁹ Spent.

³⁰ Gone.

³¹ Seek, beseech.

To seeken other leeches in the town?
 Your inconstance is your confusioun.
 Hold ye then me, or ellës our convent,
 To praye for you insufficiënt?
 Thomas, that jape¹ it is not worth a mite;
 Your malady is for we have too lite.²
 Ah, give that convent half a quarter oats;
 And give that convent four and twenty groats;
 And give that friar a penny, and let him go!
 Nay, nay, Thomas, it may no thing be so.
 What is a farthing worth parted on twelve?
 Lo, each thing that is oned³ in himselve
 Is morë strong than when it is y-scatter'd.
 Thomas, of me thou shalt not be y-flatter'd,
 Thou wouldest have our labour all for nought.
 The highë God, that all this world hath wrought,
 Saith, that the workman worthy is his hire.
 Thomas, nought of your treasure I desire
 As for myself, but that all our convent
 To pray for you is aye so diligent:
 And for to buildë Christë's owen church.
 Thomas, if ye will learnë for to wurch,⁴
 Of building up of churches may ye find
 If it be good, in Thomas' life of Ind.
 Ye lie here full of anger and of ire,
 With which the devil sëtis your heart on fire,
 And chidë here this holy innocent
 Your wife, that is so meek and patiënt.
 And therefore trow⁵ me, Thomas, if thee lest,⁶
 Ne strive not with thy wife, as for the best.
 And bear this word away now, by thy faith,
 Touching such thing, lo, what the wise man
 saith:

'Within thy housë be thou no liön;
 To thy subjéctis do none oppressiön;
 Nor make thou thine acquaintance for to flee.'
 And yet, Thomas, eftaonës⁷ charge I thee,
 Beware from ire that in thy bosom sleeps,
 Ware from the serpent, that so alily creeps
 Under the grass, and stingeth subtilly.
 Beware, my son, and hearken patiently,
 That twenty thousand men have lost their lives
 For striving with their lemans⁸ and their wives.
 Now since ye have so holy and meek a wife,
 What needeth you, Thomas, to makë strife?
 There is, y-wis,⁹ no serpent so cruël,
 When men tread on his tail, nor half so fell,¹⁰
 As woman is, when she hath caught an ire;
 Very¹¹ vengeance is then all her desire.
 Ire is a sin, one of the greatë seven,¹²
 Abominable to the God of heaven,
 And to himself it is destruction.
 This every lewëd¹³ vicar and parson
 Can say, how ire engenders homicide;
 Ire is in sooth th' executor¹⁴ of pride.
 I could of ire you say so muchë sorrow,
 My talë shouldë last until to-morrow.
 And therefore pray I God both day and night,
 An irous¹⁵ man God send him little might.

¹ Trick.² Because we have too little.³ Made one, united.⁴ Work.⁵ Believe.⁶ If it please thee.⁷ Again.⁸ Mistresses.⁹ Certainly.¹⁰ Fierce.¹¹ Pure; only.¹² The seven cardinal sins.¹³ Ignorant.¹⁴ Executioner.¹⁵ Passionate.¹⁶ Once.¹⁷ Chief magistrate or judge; Latin, "potestas;"

It is great harm, and certes great pity
 To set an irous man in high degree.

"Whilom¹⁶ there was an irous potestatë,¹⁷
 As saith Senec, that during his estate¹⁸
 Upon a day out rodë knightës two;
 And, as fortunë would that it were so,
 The one of them came home, the other not.
 Anon the knight before the judge is brought,
 That saidë thus; 'Thou hast thy fellow slain,
 For which I doom thee to the death certáin.'
 And to another knight commanded he;
 'Go, lead him to the death, I chargë thee.'
 And happened, as they went by the way
 Toward the placë where as he should day,¹⁹
 The knight came, which men weened²⁰ had been
 dead.

Then thoughtë they it was the bestë rede²¹
 To lead them both unto the judge again.
 They saidë, 'Lord, the knight hath not y-slain
 His fellow; here he standeth whole alive.'
 'Ye shall be dead,' quoth he, 'so may I thrive,
 That is to say, both one, and two, and three.'
 And to the firstë knight right thus spake he:
 'I damned thee, thou must algate²² be dead:
 And thou also must needës lose thine head,
 For thou the cause art why thy fellow dieth.'
 And to the thirdë knight right thus he sayeth,
 'Thou hast not done that I commanded thee.'
 And thus he did do slay them²³ allë three.
 Irous Cambyses was eke dronkelew,²⁴
 And aye delighted him to be a shrew.²⁵
 And so befell, a lord of his meinia,²⁶
 That loved virtuous morality,

Said on a day betwixt them two right thus:
 'A lord is lost, if he be vicious.

[An irous man is like a frantic beast,
 In which there is of wisdom none arrest²⁷];
 And drunkenness is eke a foul record
 Of any man, and namely²⁸ of a lord.

There is full many an eye and many an ear
 Awaiting on²⁹ a lord, he knows not where!
 For Goddë's love, drink more attemperly:³⁰
 Wine maketh man to losë wretchedly
 His mind, and eke his limbës every one.'

'The réverse shalt thou see,' quoth he, 'anon,
 And prove it by thine own experience,
 That winë doth to folk no such offence.

There is no wine bereaveth me my might
 Of hand, nor foot, nor of mine eyen sight.'
 And for despite he drankë muchë more
 A hundred part³¹ than he had done before,

And right anon this cursed irous wretch
 This knightë's sonë let³² before him fetch,
 Commanding him he should before him stand:

And suddenly he took his bow in hand,
 And up the string he pulled to his ear,
 And with an arrow slew the child right there.

'Now whether have I a sicker³³ hand or non?'³⁴
 Quoth he; 'Is all my might and mind agone?

Italian, "podesta." Seneca relates the story of Cornelius Piso; "De Ira," l. 16.

¹⁶ Die.¹⁷ Thought.¹⁸ Term of office.¹⁹ At all events.²⁰ Caused them to be slain.²¹ A drunkard.²² Vicious, ill-tempered.²³ Suite.²⁴ No decree, control.²⁵ Especially.²⁶ Watching.²⁷ Temperately.²⁸ Times.²⁹ Caused.³⁰ Sure.³¹ Not.

Hath wine bereaved me mine eyen sight?
 Why should I tell the answer of the knight?
 His son was slain, there is no more to say.
 Beware therefore with lordës how ye play,¹
 Sing *Placebo*;² and I shall if I can,
 But if³ it be unto a poorë man:
 To a poor man men should his vices tell,
 But not t' a lord, though he should go to hell.
 Lo, irous Cyrus, thilkë⁴ Persian,
 How he destroy'd the river of Gisen,⁵
 For that a horse of his was drowned therein,
 When that he wentë Babylon to win:
 He madë that the river was so small,
 That women mightë wade it over all.⁶
 Lo, what said he, that so well teachë can?
 'Be thou no fellow to an irous man,
 Nor with no wood⁷ man walkë by the way,
 Lest thee repent;' I will no farther say.

"Now, Thomas, levë⁸ brother, leave thine ire,

Thou shalt me find as just as is a squire;
 Hold not the devil's knife aye at thine heart;
 Thine anger doth thee all too sorë smart;⁹
 But shew to me all thy confession."

"Nay," quoth the sickë man, "by Saint Simón
 I have been shriven¹⁰ this day of my curáte;
 I have him told all wholly mine estate.
 Needeth no more to speak of it, saith he,
 But if me list of mine humility."

"Give me then of thy good to make our cloister,"
 Quoth he, "for many a mussel and many an
 oyster,

When other men have been full well at ease,
 Hath been our food, our cloister for to rese:¹¹
 And yet, God wot, unneth¹² the foundement¹³
 Performed is, nor of our pavëment
 Is not a tilë yet within our wonës:¹⁴
 By God, we owë forty pound for stones.
 Now help, Thomas, for him that harrow'd hall,¹⁵
 For ellës must we ourë bookës sell,
 And if ye lack our predication,
 Then goes this world all to destruction.
 For whoso from this world would us bereave,
 So God me savë, Thomas, by your leave,
 He would bereave out of this world the sun.
 For who can teach and worken as we conne?¹⁶
 And that is not of little time (quoth he),
 But since Elijah was, and Elisée,¹⁷
 Have friars been, that find I of record,
 In charity, y-thanked be our Lord.
 Now, Thomas, help for saintë charity."
 And down anon he set him on his knee.

This sick man waxed well nigh wood¹⁸ for ire,
 He wouldë that the friar had been a-fire
 With his falsë dissimulation.

"Such thing as is in my possession,"

Quoth he, "that may I give you and none other:
 Ye say me thus, how that I am your brother."

"Yea, certes," quoth this friar, "yea, trustë
 well;

I took our Dame the letter of our seal."¹⁹

"Now well," quoth he, "and somewhat shall I
 give

Unto your holy convent while I live;
 And in thine hand thou shalt it have anon,
 On this condition, and other none,
 That thou depart²⁰ it so, my dearë brother,
 That every friar have as much as other:
 This shalt thou swear on thy profession,
 Withoutë fraud or cavillation."²¹

"I swear it," quoth the friar, "upon my faith."

And therewithal his hand in his he lay'th;

"Lo here my faith, in me shall be no lack."

"Then put thine hand adown right by my
 back,"

Saidë this man, "and gropë well behind,
 Beneath my buttock, therë thou shalt find
 A thing, that I have hid in privy."

"Ah," thought this friar, "that shall go with
 me."

And down his hand he launched to the clift,
 In hopë for to findë there a gift.

And when this sickë man feltë this frere

About his tailë groping there and here,

Amid his hand he let the friar a fart;

There is no capel²² drawing in a cart,

That might have let a fart of such a soun'.

The friar up start, as doth a wood²³ lion:

"Ah, falsë churl," quoth he, "for Goddë's
 bones,

This hast thou in despite done for the nopes:²⁴

Thou shalt abie²⁵ this fart, if that I may."

His meinie,²⁶ which that heard of this affray,

Came leaping in, and chased out the frere,

And forth he went with a full angry cheer²⁷

And fetch'd his fellow, there as lay his store:

He looked as it were a wildë boar,

And groundë with his teeth, so was he wroth.

A sturdy pace down to the court he go'th,

Where as there wonn'd²⁸ a man of great honoür,

To whom that he was always confessoür:

This worthy man was lord of that villäge.

This friar came, as he were in a rage,

Where as this lord sat eating at his board:

Unnethës²⁹ might the friar speak one word,

Till at the last he saidë, "God you see."³⁰

This lord gan look, and said, "*Ben'dicite* /

What? Friar John, what manner world is this?

I see well that there something is amiss;

Ye look as though the wood were full of thievës.

Sit down anon, and tell me what your grieve³¹
 is,

¹ Use freedom.

² An anthem of the Roman Church, from Psalm cxvi. 9, which in the Vulgate reads, "Placebo Domino in regione vivorum"—"I will please the Lord."

³ Unless.

⁴ That.

⁵ Seneca calls it the Gyndes; Sir John Mandeville tells the story of the Euphrates. "Gihon" was the name of one of the four rivers of Eden (Gen. ii. 13).

⁶ Everywhere.

⁷ Furious.

⁸ Dear.

⁹ Pain.

¹⁰ Confessed.

¹¹ Raise, build.

¹² Scarcely.

¹³ Foundation.

¹⁴ Habitation.

¹⁵ For Christ's sake that ravaged hell; see note 11, page 51.

¹⁶ Know how to do.

¹⁷ Elisha.

¹⁸ Mad.

¹⁹ Mr Wright says that "it was a common practice to grant under the conventual seal to benefactors and others a brotherly participation in the spiritual good works of the convent, and in their expected reward after death."

²⁰ Divide.

²¹ Quibbling.

²² Horse.

²³ Fierce.

²⁴ Purpose.

²⁵ Suffer.

²⁶ Servants.

²⁷ Countenance.

²⁸ Dwelt.

²⁹ With difficulty.

³⁰ Save.

³¹ Grievance, grief.

And it shall be amended, if I may."

"I have," quoth he, "had a despite to-day,
God yield¹ you, adown in your villāge,
That in this world is none so poor a page,
That would not have abominatiōn
Of that I have received in your town :
And yet ne grieveth me nothing so sore,
As that the old² churl, with lock³es hoar,
Blasphemed hath our holy convent eke."
"Now, master," quoth this lord, "I you be-
seek"—

"No master, Sir," quoth he, "but servitōur,
Though I have had in school⁴ that honōur.
God liketh not, that men us Rabbi call,
Neither in market, nor in your large hall."
"No force,"⁵ quoth he; "but tell me all your
grief."

"Sir," quoth this friar, "an odious mischief
This day betid⁶ is to mine order and me,
And so *par consequence* to each degree
Of holy church⁷, God amend it soon."

"Sir," quoth the lord, "ye know what is to
doon :⁸

Distemp'r you not,⁹ ye be my confesso¹⁰ur.
Ye be the salt of th' earth, and the savōur ;
For Godd¹¹e's love your patiēce now hold ;
Tell me your grief." And he anon him told
As ye have heard before, ye know well what.
The lady of the house aye still¹² sat,
Till she had heard¹³ what the friar said.

"Hey, Godd¹⁴e's mother," quoth she, "blissful
maid,

Is there ought ell¹⁵es? tell me faithfully."

"Madame," quoth he, "how thinketh you
thereby?"

"How thinketh me?" quoth she; "so God me
speed,

I say, a churl hath done a churlish deed.
What should I say? God let him never th¹⁶e ;
His sick¹⁷ head is full of vanity ;
I hold him in a manner phrenesy."¹⁸
"Madame," quoth he, "by God, I shall not lie,
But I in other wise may be awreke,¹⁹
I shall diffame him ov'r all there²⁰ I speak ;
This fals²¹ blasphemo²²ur, that charged me
To part²³ that will not departed be,
To every man alik²⁴e, with mischance."

The lord sat still, as he were in a trance,
And in his heart he rolled up and down,

"How had this churl imaginatiōn
To shew²⁵ such a problem to the frere.
Never ere now heard I of such matt²⁶ere ;
I trow²⁷ the Devil put it in his mind.
In all arismetrik²⁸ shall there no man find,
Before this day, of such a questiōn.
Who should²⁹ make a demonstratiōn,
That every man should have alike his part
As of the sound and savour of a fart?
O nic³⁰e³¹ proud³² churl, I shrew³³ his face.

¹ Reward you.

² No matter.

³ Befallen.

⁴ Do.

⁵ Be not impatient, out of temper.

⁶ Thrive.

⁷ Sort of frenzy.

⁸ Revenged.

⁹ Speak discredibly of him everywhere.

¹⁰ Believe.

¹¹ Arithmetic.

¹² Foolish; French, "niais."

¹³ Curse.

¹⁴ Ill-favour attend him (the churl).

¹⁵ Little.

¹⁶ Judge, decide.

¹⁷ Divided.

Lo, Sir¹⁸es," quoth the lord, "with hard¹⁹e grace,²⁰
Who ever heard of such a thing ere now?

To every man alik²¹e? tell me how.

It is impossible, it may not be.

Hey, nic²²e²³ churl, God let him never th²⁴e."²⁵

The rumbling of a fart, and every soun',

Is but of air reverberatiōn,

And ever wasteth lite and lite²⁶ away ;

There is no man can deemen,²⁷ by my fay,

If that it were departed²⁸ equally.

What? lo, my churl, lo yet how shrewedly²⁹

Unto my confesso³⁰ur to-day he spake ;

I hold him certain a demoniac.

Now eat your meat, and let the churl go play,

Let him go hang himself a devil way!"

Now stood the lord³¹e's squi³²er at the board,
That carv'd his meat, and heard³³e word by word
Of all this thing, which that I have you said.

"My lord," quoth he, "be ye not evil paid,³⁴

I could³⁵ tell³⁶, for a gown³⁷e-cloth,³⁸

To you, Sir Friar, so that ye be not wroth,

How that this fart should even³⁹ deal⁴⁰ed be

Among your convent, if it liked thee."

"Tell," quoth the lord, "and thou shalt have
anon

A gown⁴¹e-cloth, by God and by Saint John."

"My lord," quoth he, "when that the weather
is fair,

Without⁴²e wind, or perturbing of air,

Let⁴³ bring a cart-wheel here into this hall,

But look⁴⁴e that it have its spok⁴⁵es all ;

Twelve spok⁴⁶es hath a cart-wheel commonly ;

And bring me then twelve friars, know ye why ?

For thirteen is a convent as I guess ;⁴⁷

Your confesso⁴⁸ur here, for his worthiness,

Shall perform up⁴⁹ the number of his convent.

Then shall they kneel adown by one assent,

And to each spok⁵⁰e's end, in this mann⁵¹ere,

Full sadly⁵² lay his nos⁵³e shall a frere ;

Your noble confesso⁵⁴ur there, God him save,

Shall hold his nose upright under the nave.

Then shall this churl, with belly stiff and
tought⁵⁵

As any tabour,⁵⁶ hither be y-brought ;

And set him on the wheel right of this cart

Upon the nave, and make him let a fart,

And ye shall see, on peril of my life,

By very proof that is demonstrative,

That equally the sound of it will wend,⁵⁷

And eke the stink, unto the spok⁵⁸es' end,

Save that this worthy man, your confesso⁵⁹ur

(Because he is a man of great honōur),

Shall have the first⁶⁰e fruit, as reason is ;

The noble usāge of friars yet it is,

The worthy men of them shall first be served,

And certainly he hath it well deserved ;

He hath to-day taught us so much⁶¹e good

With preaching in the pulpit where he stood,

That I may vouch⁶²safe, I say for me,

¹⁸ Impiously, wickedly.

¹⁹ Displeased.

²⁰ Cloth for a gown.

²¹ Equally.

²² Cause.

²³ The regular number of monks or friars in a convent was fixed at twelve, with a superior, in imitation of the apostles and their Master ; and large religious houses were held to consist of so many convents.

²⁴ Complete.

²⁵ Carefully, steadily.

²⁶ Tight.

²⁷ Drum.

²⁸ Go.

He had the first smell of fartës three ;
And so would all his brethren hardily ;
He beareth him so fair and holily."

The lord, the lady, and each man, save the
frere,
Said, that Jankin spake in this mattère
As well as Euclid, or as Ptolemy.
Touching the churl, they said that subtilty
And high wit made him speaken as he spake ;
He is no fool, nor no demoniac.
And Jankin hath y-won a newë gown ;
My tale is done, we are almost at town.

THE CLERK'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.

"SIR Clerk of Oxenford," our Hostë said,
"Ye ride as still and coy, as doth a maid
That were new spoused, sitting at the board :
This day I heard not of your tongue a word.
I trow ye study about some sophime :¹
But Solomon saith, every thing hath time.
For Goddë's sakë, be of better cheer,²
It is no timë for to study here.
Tell us some merrv talë, by your fay ;³
For what man that is entered in a play,
He needës must unto that play assent.
But preachë not, as friars do in Lent,
To make us for our oldë sinnës weep,
Nor that thy talë make us not to sleep.
Tell us some merry thing of áventures.
Your terms, your colourës, and your figúres,
Keep them in store, till so be ye indite
High style, as when that men to kingës write.
Speakë so plain at this time, I you pray,
That we may understandë what ye say."

This worthy Clerk benignëly answe'r'd ;
"Hostë," quoth he, "I am under your yerd,⁴
Ye have of us as now the governáncë,
And therefore would I do you obeisáncë,
As far as reason asketh, hardily :⁵
I will you tell a talë, which that I
Learn'd at Padova of a worthy clerk,
As proved by his wordës and his werk.
He is now dead, and nailed in his chest,
I pray to God to give his soul good rest.
Francis Petrarc', the laureate poët,⁶
Hightë⁷ this clerk, whose rhetoric so sweet

¹ Sophism. ² Liveller mien. ³ Faith.

⁴ Rod ; as the emblem of government or direction.

⁵ Boldly, truly.

⁶ Francesco Petrarca, born 1304, died 1374 ; for his Latin epic poem on the career of Scipio, called "Africa," he was solemnly crowned with the poetic laurel in the Capitol of Rome, on Easter-day of 1341.

⁷ Was called.

⁸ An eminent jurist and philosopher, now almost forgotten, who died four or five years after Petrarch.

⁹ Saluzzo, a district of Savoy ; its marquises were celebrated during the Middle Ages.

¹⁰ The region called Æmilia, across which ran the Via Æmilia—made by M. Æmilius Lepidus, who was consul at Rome B.C. 187. It continued the Flaminian Way from Ariminum (Rimini) across the Po at Placentia to Mediolanum (Milan), traversing Cisalpine Gaul.

¹¹ Narrate.

¹² Irrelevant.

Illumin'd all Itále of poetry,
As Linian⁸ did of philosophy,
Or law, or other art particulére :
But death, that will not suffer us dwell here
But as it were a twinkling of an eye,
Them both hath slain, and allë we shall die.

"But forth to tellen of this worthy man,
That taughtë me this tale, as I began,
I say that first he with high style inditeth
(Ere he the body of his talë writeth)
A proem, in the which describeth he
Piedmont, and of Saluces⁹ the countrý,
And speaketh of the Pennine hillës high,
That be the bounds of all West Lombardy :
And of Mount Vesulus in special,
Where as the Po out of a wellë small
Taketh his firstë springing and his source,
That eastward aye increaseth in his course
T^o Emilia-ward,¹⁰ to Ferrare, and Venice,
The which a long thing werë to devise.¹¹
And truëly, as to my judgëment,
Me thinketh it a thing impertinent,¹²
Save that he would conveyë his mattère :
But this is the tale, which that ye shall hear."

THE TALE.¹³

Pars Prima.

There is, right at the west side of Itále,
Down at the root of Vesulus¹⁴ the cold,
A lusty¹⁵ plain, abundant of vitáille ;
There many a town and tow'r thou may'st
behold,

That founded were in time of fathers old,
And many another délectáble sight ;
And Saluces this noble country hight.

A marquis whilom lord was of that land,
As were his worthy elders¹⁶ him before,
And obedient, aye ready to his hand,
Were all his lieges, bothë less and more :
Thus in delight he liv'd, and had done yore,¹⁷
Belov'd and drad,¹⁸ through favour of fortune,
Both of his lordës and of his commúne.¹⁹

Therewith he was, to speak of lineage,
The gentlest y-born of Lombardy,
A fair persón, and strong, and young of age,
And full of honour and of courtesy :
Discreet enough his country for to gie,²⁰
Saving in some things that he was to blame ;
And Walter was this youngë lordë's name.

I blame him thus, that he consider'd not

¹³ Petrarch, in his Latin romance, "De obedientia et fide uxoria Mythologia," translated the charming story of "the patient Grisel" from the Italian of Boccaccio's "Decameron ;" and Chaucer has closely followed Petrarch's translation, made in 1373, the year before that in which he died. The fact that the embassy to Genoa, on which Chaucer was sent, took place in 1372-73, has lent countenance to the opinion that the English poet did actually visit the Italian bard at Padua, and hear the story from his own lips. This, however, is only a probability ; for it is a moot point whether the two poets ever met.

¹⁴ Monte Viso, a lofty peak at the junction of the Maritime and Cottian Alps ; from two springs on its east side rises the Po.

¹⁵ Ancestors.

¹⁶ Held in reverence.

¹⁷ Long.

¹⁸ Commonalty.

¹⁹ Guide, rule.

²⁰ Pleasant.

In timē coming what might him betide,
But on his present lust¹ was all his thought,
And for to hawk and hunt on every side;
Well nigh all other carē let he aside,
And eke he would (that was the worst of all)
Weddē no wife for aught that might befall.

Only that point his people bare so sore,
That flockmel² on a day to him they went,
And one of them, that wisest was of lore
(Or ellēs that the lord would best assent
That he should tell him what the people meant,
Or ellēs could he well shew such mattēre),
He to the marquis said as ye shall hear.

"O noble Marquis! your humanity
Assureth us and gives us hardiness,
As oft as time is of necessity,
That we to you may tell our heaviness:
Acceptē, Lord, now of your gentleness,
What we with piteous heart unto you plain,³
And let your ears my voicē not disdain.

"All⁴ have I nought to do in this mattēre
More than another man hath in this place,
Yet forasmuch as ye, my Lord so dear,
Have always shewed me favour and grace,
I dare the better ask of you a space
Of audience, to shewen our request,
And ye, my Lord, to do right as you lest.⁵

"For certes, Lord, so well us likē you
And all your work, and ev'r have done, that we
Ne couldē not ourselves devisē how
We mightē live in more felicity:
Save one thing, Lord, if that your will it be,
That for to be a wedded man you lest;
Then were your people in sovereign heart's rest.⁶

"Bowē your neck under the blissful yoke
Of sovereignty, and not of service,
Which that men call espousal or wedlōck:
And thinkē, Lord, among your thoughtēs wise,
How that our dayēs pass in sundry wise;
For though we sleep, or wake, or roam, or ride,
Aye fleeth time, it will no man abide.

"And though your greenē youthē flow'r as
yet,
In creepeth age always as still as stone,
And death menāceth every age, and smit⁷
In each estate, for there escapeth none:
And all so certain as we know each one
That we shall die, as uncertāin we all
Be of that day when death shall on us fall.

"Acceptē then of us the true intent,⁸
That never yet refused yourē hest,⁹
And we will, Lord, if that ye will assent,
Choose you a wife, in short time at the lest,¹⁰
Born of the gentilest and of the best
Of all this land, so that it ought to seem
Honour to God and you, as we can deem.

"Deliver us out of all this busy dread,¹¹
And take a wife, for highē Goddē's sake:
For if it so befell, as God forbid,

¹ Pleasure.

² All in a flock or body.

⁴ Although.

⁶ Completely satisfied, at ease.

⁸ Mind, desire.

¹¹ Doubt.

¹³ Alive.

³ Complain of.

⁵ As pleaseth you.

⁷ Smiteth.

¹⁰ Least.

¹² Cease, become extinct.

¹⁴ Before.

¹⁵ Servitude.

That through your death your lineage should
slake,¹²

And that a strange successor shouldē take
Your heritage, oh! woe were us on live:¹³
Wherefore we pray you hastily to wive."

Their meekē prayer and their piteous cheer
Madē the marquis for to have pity.

"Ye will," quoth he, "mine owen people dear,
To that I ne'er ere¹⁴ thought constrainē me.
I me rejoiced of my liberty,

That seldom time is found in marriage;
Where I was free, I must be in servage!¹⁵

"But natheless I see your true intent,
And trust upon your wit, and have done aye:
Wherefore of my free will I will assent
To weddē me, as soon as e'er I may.
But whereas ye have proffer'd me to-day
To choosē me a wife, I you release
That choice, and pray you of that proffer cease.

"For God it wot, that children often been
Unlike their worthy elders them before,
Bountē¹⁶ comes all of God, not of the strenē¹⁷
Of which they be engender'd and y-bore:
I trust in Goddē's bountē, and therefore
My marriage, and mine estate and rest,
I him betake;¹⁸ he may do as him lest.

"Let me alone in choosing of my wife;
That charge upon my back I will endure:
But I you pray, and charge upon your life,
That what wife that I take, ye me assure
To worship¹⁹ her, while that her life may dure,
In word and work both here and ellēswhere,
As she an emperorē's daughter were.

"And farthermore this shall ye swear, that
ye
Against my choice shall never grudge²⁰ nor
strive.

For since I shall forego my liberty
At your request, as ever may I thrive,
Where as mine heart is set, there will I wive
And but²¹ ye will assent in such mannēre,
I pray you speak no more of this mattēre."

With heartily will they sworn and assent'
To all this thing, there said not one wight nay:
Beseeching him of grace, ere that they went,
That he would grantē them a certain day
Of his espousal, soon as e'er he may,
For yet always the people somewhat dread²²
Lest that the marquis wouldē no wife wed.

He granted them a day, such as him lest,
On which he would be wedded sickerly,²³
And said he did all this at their request;
And they with humble heart full buxomly,²⁴
Kneeling upon their knees full reverently,
Him thanked all; and thus they have an end
Of their intent, and home again they wend.

And hereupon he to his officers
Commanded for the feastē to purvey.²⁵
And to his privy knightēs and squiērs

¹⁶ Goodness.

¹⁸ Commend to him.

²⁰ Murmur.

²² Were in fear or doubt.

²⁴ Obediently; Anglo-Saxon, "bogsom," old English, "boughsome," that can be easily bent or bowed; German, "biegsam," pliant, obedient.

¹⁷ Stock, race.

¹⁹ Honour.

²¹ Unless.

²³ Certainly.

²⁵ Provide.

Such charge he gave, as him list on them lay :
And they to his commandement obey,
And each of them doth all his diligence
To do unto the feast all reverence.

Pars Secunda.

Not far from thilk¹ palace honourable,
Where as this marquis shope² his marriage,
There stood a thorp,³ of sight⁴ délectable,
In which the poor⁵ folk of that village
Hadd⁶ their beast⁷es and their harbourage,⁸
And of their labour took their sustenance,
After the earth⁹ gave them abundance.

Among this poor¹⁰ folk there dwelt a man
Which that was holden poorest of them all ;
But high¹¹ God sometim¹²es send¹³ can
His grace unto a little ox's stall ;
Janicola men of that thorp him call.
A daughter had he, fair enough to sight,
And Griseldis this young¹⁴ maiden hight.

But for to speak of virtuous beauty,
Then was she one the fairest under sun :
Full poor¹⁵ly y-foster'd up was she ;
No likerous lust¹⁶ was in her heart y-run ;
Well offer of the well than of the tun¹⁷
She drank, and, for¹⁸ she would¹⁹ virtue please,
She knew well labour, but no idle ease.

But though this maiden tender were of age,
Yet in the breast of her virginity
There was inclos'd a sad and ripe corage ;²⁰
And in great reverence and charity
Her old²¹ poor²² father foster'd she.
A few sheep, spinning, on the field she kept,
She would²³ not be idle till she slept.

And when she homeward cam²⁴, she would
bring
Wort²⁵es,²⁶ and other herb²⁷es, tim²⁸es oft,
The which she shred and seeth'd for her living,
And made her bed full hard, and nothing soft :
And aye she kept her father's life on loft²⁹
With ev'ry obeisance and diligence,
That child may do to father's reverence.

Upon Griselda, this poor creature,
Full often sithe³⁰ this marquis set his eye,
As he on hunting rode, paraventure :³¹
And when it fell that he might her espy,
He not with wanton looking of folly
His eyen cast on her, but in sad³² wise
Upon her cheer³³ he would him oft advise ;³⁴

Commending in his heart her womanhead,
And eke her virtue, passing any wight
Of so young age, as well in cheer as deed.
For though the people have no great insight
In virtue, he considered full right
Her bount³⁵,³⁶ and disposed that he would
Wed only her, if ever wed he should.

The day of wedding came, but no wight can
Tell³⁷ what woman that it should³⁸ be ;
For which marvail wonder'd many a man,

¹ That. ² Prepared ; resolved on. ³ Hamlet.
⁴ Dwelling. ⁵ Luxurious pleasure.
⁶ Of water than of wine. ⁷ Because.
⁸ Steadfast and mature spirit.
⁹ Plants, cabbages. ¹⁰ Up, aloft. ¹¹ Times.
¹² By chance. ¹³ Serious.

And said³⁹, when they were in privy,
"Will not our lord yet leave his vanity ?
Will he not wed ? Alas, alas the while !
Why will he thus himself and us beguile ?"

But nathelless this marquis had done⁴⁰ make
Of gemm⁴¹es, set in gold and in azure,
Brooches and ring⁴²es, for Griselda's sake,
And of her clothing took he the meas⁴³ure
Of a maiden like unto her stat⁴⁴ure,
And eke of other ornament⁴⁵es all
That unto such a wedding should⁴⁶ fall.⁴⁷

The time of undern⁴⁸ of the sam⁴⁹ day
Approach⁵⁰ed, that this wedding should⁵¹ be,
And all the palace put was in array,
Both hall and chamber, each in its degree,
Houses of office stuffed with plenty
There may'st thou see of dainteous vitaille,
That may be found, as far as lasts Itale.

This royal marquis, rich⁵²ly array'd,
Lord⁵³es and ladies in his company,
The which unto the feast⁵⁴ were pray'd,
And of his retinue the bach'ler⁵⁵,
With many a sound of sundry melody,
Unto the village, of the which I told,
In this array the right way did they hold.

Griseld' of this (God wot) full innocent,
That for her shap⁵⁶en⁵⁷ was all this array,
To fetch⁵⁸ water at a well is went,
And home she came as soon as e'er she may.
For well she had heard say, that on that day
The marquis should⁵⁹ wed, and, if she might,
She fain would have seen somewhat of that
sight.

She thought, "I will with other maidens
stand,
That be my fellows, in our door, and see
The marchioness ; and therefore will I fand⁶⁰
To do at home, as soon as it may be,
The labour which belongeth unto me,
And then I may at leisure her behold,
If she this way unto the castle hold."

And as she would over the threshold gon,
The marquis came and gan for her to call,
And she set down her water-pot anon
Beside the threshold, in an ox's stall,
And down upon her knees she gan to fall,
And with sad⁶¹ countenanc⁶² kneeled still,
Till she had heard what was the lord⁶³'s will.

The thoughtful marquis spake unto the maid
Full soberly, and said in this mann⁶⁴ere :
"Where is your father, Griseldis ?" he said.
And she with reverence, in humble cheer,⁶⁵
Answered, "Lord, he is all ready here."
And in she went without⁶⁶ longer let,⁶⁷
And to the marquis she her father fet.⁶⁸

He by the hand then took the poor⁶⁹ man,
And said⁷⁰ thus, when he him had aside :
"Janicola, I neither may nor can
Longer the pleasance of mine heart⁷¹ hide ;
If that thou vouch⁷²safe, whatso betide,

¹⁴ Countenance, demeanour. ¹⁵ Consider.
¹⁶ Goodness. ¹⁷ Caused. ¹⁸ Befit.
¹⁹ Afternoon, or evening ; see note 14, page 79.
²⁰ Prepared, designed.
²¹ Strive. ²² Steady.
²³ With humble air. ²⁴ Delay. ²⁵ Fetched.

Thy daughter will I take, ere that I wend,¹
As for my wife, unto her life's end.

"Thou lovest me, that know I well certain,
And art my faithful liegeman y-bore,²
And all that liketh me, I dare well sayn
It liketh thee; and specially therefore
Tell me that point, that I have said before,—
If that thou wilt unto this purpose draw,
To take me as for thy son-in-law."

This sudden case³ the man astonished so,
That red he wax'd, abash'd,⁴ and all quaking
He stood; unneth⁵ said he wordes mo',
But only thus; "Lord," quoth he, "my willing
Is as ye will, nor against your liking
I will no thing, mine owen lord so dear;
Right as you list govern⁶ this mattere."

"Then will I," quoth the marquis softly,
"That in thy chamber I, and thou, and she,
Have a collation;⁷ and know'st thou why?
For I will ask her, if her will it be
To be my wife, and rule her after me:
And all this shall be done in thy presence,
I will not speak out of thine audience."⁸

And in the chamber while they were about
The treaty, which ye shall hereafter hear,
The people came into the house without,
And wonder'd them in how honest manere
And tenderly she kept her father dear;
But utterly Griseldis wonder might,
For never erst⁹ ne saw she such a sight.

No wonder is though that she be astoned,¹⁰
To see so great a guest come in that place,
She never was to no such guestes wont;¹¹
For which she looked with full pale face.
But shortly forth this matter for to chase,¹²
These are the wordes that the marquis said
To this benign¹³, very,¹⁴ faithful maid.

"Griseld'," he said, "ye shall well under-
stand,
It liketh to your father and to me
That I you wed, and eke it may so stand,
As I suppose ye will that it so be:
But these demandes ask I first," quoth he,
"Since that it shall be done in hasty wise;
Will ye assent, or elles you advise?"¹⁵

"I say this, be ye ready with good heart
To all my lust,¹⁶ and that I freely may,
As me best thinketh, do¹⁷ you laugh or smart,
And never ye to grudg¹⁸,¹⁹ night nor day,
And eke when I say Yea, ye say not Nay,
Neither by word, nor frowning countenance?
Swear this, and here I swear our alliance."

Wond'ring upon this word, quaking for
dread,
She said; "Lord, indigne and unworthy
Am I to this honour that ye me bede,²⁰
But as ye will yourself, right so will I:
And here I swear, that never willingly
In work or thought I will you disobey,

1 Go.

2 Born.

3 Event.

4 Amazed.

5 Scarcely.

6 Conference.

7 Hearing.

8 Before.

9 Astonished.

10 Accustomed, wont.

11 Push on, pursue.

12 True; French, "vraie."

13 Consider.

14 Pleasure.

15 Cause.

16 Murmur.

For to be dead; though me were loth to
dey."¹⁸

"This is enough, Griselda mine," quoth he.
And forth he went with a full sober cheer,
Out at the door, and after then came she,
And to the people he said in this manere:
"This is my wife," quoth he, "that standeth
here.

Honour¹⁹ her, and love her, I you pray,
Whoso me loves; there is no more to say."

And, for that nothing of her old²⁰ gear
She should²¹ bring into his house, he bade
That women should despoil²² her right there;
Of which these ladies wer²³ nothing glad
To handle her cloth²⁴ wherein she was clad:
But natheless this maiden bright of hue
From foot to head they clothed have all new.

Her hair²⁵ have they comb'd that lay un-
tress'd²⁶

Full ruddily, and with their fingers small
A crown upon her head they have dress'd,
And set her full of nouches²⁷ great and small:
Of her array why should I make a tale?
Unneth²⁸ the people her knew for her fairnes,
When she transmuted was in such riches.

The marquis hath her spoused with a ring
Brought for the same cause, and then her set
Upon a horse snow-white, and well ambling,
And to his palace, ere he longer let²⁹
(With joyful people, that her led and met),
Conveyed her; and thus the day they spend
In revel, till the sunne gan descend.

And, shortly forth this tale for to chase,
I say, that to this new³⁰ marchioness
God hath such favour sent her of his grace,
That it ne seemed not by likeliness
That she was born and fed in rudeness,—
As in a cot, or in an ox's stall,—
But nourish'd in an emperor's hall.

To every wight she waxen³¹ is so dear
And worshipful, that folk where she was
born,

That from her birth³² knew her year by year,
Unneth³³ trowed³⁴ they, but durst have sworn,
That to Janicol' of whom I spake before,
She was not daughter, for by conjecture
Them thought she was another creature.

For though that ever virtuous was she,
She was increased in such excellence
Of thew³⁵ good, y-set in high bounte,
And so discreet, and fair of eloquence,
So benign, and so digne³⁶ of reverence,
And could³⁷ so the people's heart embrace,
That each her lov'd that looked on her face.

Not only of Saluces in the town
Published was the bounte of her name,
But eke besides in many a region;
If one said well, another said the same:
So spread of her³⁸ high bounte the fame,

17 Offer.

18 Die.

19 Strip.

20 Loose, unplaited.

21 Ornaments of some kind not precisely known;
some editions read "ouches," studs, brooches.

22 Delayed.

23 Grown.

24 Scarcely believed.

25 Qualities.

26 Worthy.

That men and women, young as well as old,
Went to Saluces, her for to behold.

Thus Walter lowly,—nay, but royally,—
Wedded with fortunate honesteté,¹
In Goddē's peace lived full easily
At home, and outward grace enough had he :
And, for he saw that under low degree
Was honest virtue hid, the people him held
A prudent man, and that is seen full seld'.²

Not only this Griseldis through her wit
Couth all the feat³ of wifely homeliness,
But eke, when that the case required it,
The common profit couldē she redress :⁴
There n'as discord, rancour, nor heaviness
In all the land, that she could not appease,
And wisely bring them all in rest and ease.

Though that her husband absent were or
non,⁵

If gentlemen, or other of that country,
Were wroth,⁶ she wouldē bringē them at one,
So wise and ripē wordēs haddē she,
And judgēment of so great equity,
That she from heaven sent was, as men wend,⁷
People to save, and every wrong t'amend.

Not longē time after that this Grisild'
Was wedded, she a daughter had y-bore ;
All she had lever⁸ borne a knavē⁹ child,
Glad was the marquis and his folk therefore ;
For, though a maiden child came all before,
She may unto a knavē child attain
By likelihood, since she is not barrēn.

Pars Tertia.

There fell, as falleth many timēs mo',
When that his child had sucked but a throw,¹⁰
This marquis in his heartē longed so
To tempt his wife, her sadness¹¹ for to know,
That he might not out of his heartē throw
This marvellous desire his wife t' assay ;¹²
Needless,¹³ God wot, he thought her to affray.¹⁴

He had assayed her anough before,
And found her ever good ; what needed it
Her for to tempt, and always more and more ?
Though some men praise it for a subtle wit,
But as for me, I say that evil it sit¹⁵
T' assay a wife when that it is no need,
And puttē her in anguish and in dread.

For which this marquis wrought in this man-
nere :

He came at night alone there as she lay,
With sternē face and with full troubled cheer,
And saidē thus ; "Griseld'," quoth he, "that
day

That I you took out of your poor array,
And put you in estate of high nobléas,
Ye have it not forgotten, as I guess.

"I say, Griseld', this present dignity,

¹ Virtue.

² Seldom.

³ Knew, understood, all the duty or performance.

⁴ She could well labour for the public advantage.

⁵ Not.

⁶ At feud.

⁷ Weened, imagined.

⁸ Though she had rather.

⁹ Male.

¹⁰ Little while.

¹¹ Steadfastness, endurance.

¹² Try.

¹³ Causelessly.

¹⁴ Alarm, disturb.

¹⁵ It ill became him.

¹⁶ Believe.

¹⁷ Two.

In which that I have put you, as I trow¹⁶
Maketh you not forgetful for to be
That I you took in poor estate full low,
For any weal you must yourselfē know.
Take heed of every word that I you say,
There is no wight that hears it but we tway.¹⁷

"Ye know yourself well how that ye came
here

Into this house, it is not long ago ;
And though to me ye be right lefe¹⁸ and dear,
Unto my gentles¹⁹ ye be nothing so :
They say, to them it is great shame and woe
For to be subject, and be in servage,
To thee, that born art of small lineage.

"And namely²⁰ since thy daughter was y-bore
These wordēs have they spoken doubtēless ;
But I desire, as I have done before,
To live my life with them in rest and peace :
I may not in this case be reckēless ;
I must do with thy daughter for the best,
Not as I would, but as my gentles lest.²¹

"And yet, God wot, this is full loth²² to me :
But natheless withoutē your weeting²³
I will nought do ; but this will I," quoth he,
"That ye to me assenten in this thing.
Shew now your patience in your working,
That ye me hight²⁴ and swore in your villāge
The day that maked was our marriage."

When she had heard all this, she not amev'd²⁵
Neither in word, in cheer, nor countenance
(For, as it seemed, she was not aggriev'd) ;
She saidē ; "Lord, all lies in your pleasānce,
My child and I, with hearty obeisānce
Be yourēs all, and ye may save or spill²⁶
Your owen thing : work then after your will.

"There may no thing, so God my soulē save,
Likē to²⁷ you, that may displeasē me :
Nor I desirē nothing for to have,
Nor dreadē for to lose, save only ye :
This will is in mine heart, and aye shall be,
No length of time, nor death, may this deface,
Nor change my corage²⁸ to another place."

Glad was the marquis for her answering,
But yet he feigned as he were not so ;
All dreary was his cheer and his looking
When that he should out of the chamber go.
Soon after this, a furlong way or two,²⁹
He privily hath told all his intent
Unto a man, and to his wife him sent.

A manner sergeant³⁰ was this private man,³¹
The which he faithful often founden had
In thingēs great, and eke such folk well can
Do execution in thingēs bad :
The lord knew well, that he him loved and
drad.³²

And when this sergeant knew his lordē's will,
Into the chamber stalked he full still.

"Madam," he said, "ye must forgive it me,

¹⁸ Pleasant, loved.

¹⁹ Nobles, gentlefolk.

²⁰ Especially.

²¹ Please.

²² Odious.

²³ Knowing.

²⁴ Promised.

²⁵ Changed.

²⁶ Destroy.

²⁷ Be pleasing.

²⁸ Spirit, heart.

²⁹ About as much time as one might take to walk a fur
long or two ; a short space.

³⁰ A kind of squire.

³¹ Confidant, trusty tool.

³² Dreaded.

Though I do thing to which I am constrain'd ;
Ye be so wise, that right well knowe ye
That lordes' hestes may not be y-feign'd ;¹
They may well be bewailed and complain'd,
But men must needs unto their lust² obey ;
And so will I, there is no more to say.

"This child I am commanded for to take."
And spake no more, but out the child he hent³
Dispiteously,⁴ and gan a cheer to make⁵
As though he would have slain it ere he went.
Griseldis must all suffer and consent :
And as a lamb she sat there meek and still,
And let this cruel sergeant do his will.

Suspicious⁶ was the diffame⁷ of this man,
Suspect his face, suspect his word also,
Suspect the time in which he this began :
Alas ! her daughter, that she loved so,
She weened⁸ he would have it slain right tho,⁹
But natheless she neither wept nor siked,¹⁰
Conforming her to what the marquis liked.

But at the last to speake she began,
And meekly she unto the sergeant pray'd,
So as he was a worthy gentle man,
That she might kiss her child, ere that it died :
And in her barme¹¹ this little child she laid,
With full sad face, and gan the child to bless,¹²
And lulled it, and after gan it kiss.

And thus she said in her benigne voice :
"Farewell, my child, I shall thee never see ;
But, since I have thee marked with the cross,
Of that father y-blessed may'st thou be
That for us died upon a cross of tree :
Thy soul, my little child, I him betake,¹³
For this night shalt thou dien for my sake."

I trow¹⁴ that to a norice¹⁵ in this case
It had been hard this ruth¹⁶ for to see :
Well might a mother then have cried, "Alas !" ¹⁷
But natheless so sad steadfast was she,
That she endured all adversity,
And to the sergeant meekely she said,
"Have here again your little young¹⁸ maid.

"Go now," quoth she, "and do my lord's
behest.

And one thing would I pray you of your grace,
But if¹⁷ my lord forbade you at the least,
Bury this little body in some place,
That neither beasts nor birdes it arace."¹⁸
But he no word would to that purpose say,
But took the child and went upon his way.

The sergeant came unto his lord again,
And of Griselda's words and of her cheer¹⁹
He told him point for point, in short and plain,
And him presented with his daughter dear.
Somewhat this lord had ruth in his mannere,
But natheless his purpose held he still,
As lordes do, when they will have their will ;
And bade this sergeant that he privily

Should²⁰ the child full softly wind and wrap,
With alle circumstances tenderly,
And carry it in a coffer, or in lap ;
But, upon pain his head off for to swap,²¹
That no man should²² know of his intent,
Nor whence he came, nor whither that he went ;

But at Bologna, to his sister dear,
That at that time of Panico²³ was Countess,
He should it take, and shew her this mattere,
Beseeching her to do her business
This child to foster in all gentleness,
And whose child it was he bade her hide
From every wight, for aught that might betide.

The sergeant went, and hath fulfill'd this
thing.

But to the marquis now returne we ;
For now went he full fast imagining
If by his wife's cheer he might²⁴ see,
Or by her wordes apperceive, that she
Were changed ; but he never could her find,
But ever-in-one²⁵ alik²⁶ sad²⁷ and kind.

As glad, as humble, as busy in service,
And eke in love, as she was wont to be,
Was she to him, in every manner wise ;²⁸
And of her daughter not a word spake she ;
No accident for no adversity²⁹
Was seen in her, nor e'er her daughter's name
She named, or in earnest or in game.

Pars Quarta.

In this estate there passed be four year
Ere she with child³⁰ was ; but, as God wo'ld,
A knave³¹ child she bare by this Waltre,
Full gracious and fair for to behold ;
And when that folk it to his father told,
Not only he, but all his country, merry
Were for this child, and God they thank and
hery.³²

When it was two year old, and from the
breast

Departed³³ of the norice, on a day
This marquis caught³⁴ yet another lest³⁵
To tempt his wife yet farther, if he may.
Oh ! needless was she tempted in assay ;³⁶
But wedded men not connen no measure,³⁷
When that they find a patient creature.

"Wife," quoth the marquis, "ye have heard
ere this

My people sickly bear³⁸ our marriage ;
And namely³⁹ since my son y-boren is,
Now is it worse than ever in all our age :
The murmur alays mine heart and my corage,
For to mine ears cometh the voice so smart,⁴⁰
That it wall nigh destroyed hath mine heart.

"Now say they thus, 'When Walter is
y-gone,

¹ It will not do merely to feign compliance with a lord's commands.

² Pleasure.

³ Seized.

⁴ Unpitifully.

⁵ To make a show, assume an aspect.

⁶ Ominous.

⁷ Reputation, evil fame.

⁸ Thought.

⁹ Then.

¹⁰ Sighed.

¹¹ Lap, bosom.

¹² Cross.

¹³ Commit unto him.

¹⁴ Believe.

¹⁵ Nurse.

¹⁶ Pitiful case, sight.

¹⁷ Unless.

¹⁸ Tear ; French, "arracher."

¹⁹ Demeanour.

²⁰ Strike.

²¹ Panico.

²² Constantly.

²³ Steadfast.

²⁴ Sort of way.

²⁵ No change of humour resulting from her affliction.

²⁶ Male, boy.

²⁷ Praise.

²⁸ Taken, weaned.

²⁹ Was seized by yet another desire.

³⁰ Trial.

³¹ Know no moderation.

³² Do not regard with pleasure. Compare the Latin phrase, "agre ferre."

³³ Especially.

³⁴ Sorely, painfully.

Then shall the blood of Janicol' succeed,
And be our lord, for other have we none :¹
Such wordes say my people, out of drede.¹
Well ought I of such murmur takē heed,
For certainly I dread all such sentence,²
Though they not plainen in mine audience.³

"I wouldē live in peace, if that I might ;
Wherefore I am disposed utterly,
As I his sister served ere⁴ by night,
Right so think I to serve him privily.
This warn I you, that ye not suddenly
Out of yourself for no woe should outraie ;⁵
Be patient, and thereof I you pray."

"I have," quoth she, "said thus, and ever
shall,

I will no thing, nor n'll no thing, certāin,
But as you list ; not grieveth me at all
Though that my daughter and my son be slain
At your commandement ; that is to sayn,
I have not had no part of children twain,
But first sicknéas, and after woe and pain.

"Ye be my lord, do with your owen thing
Right as you list, and ask no rede⁶ of me :
For, as I left at home all my clothing
When I came first to you, right so," quoth she,
"Left I my will and all my liberty,
And took your clothing : wherefore I you pray,
Do your pleasānce, I will your lust⁷ obey.

"And, certes, if I haddē prescience
Your will to know, ere ye your lust⁷ me told,
I would it do withoutē negligence :
But, now I know your lust, and what ye wo'ld,
All your pleasāncē firm and stable I hold ;
For, wist I that my death might do you ease,
Right gladly would I dien you to please.

"Death may not makē no comparisoūn
Unto your love." And when this marquis say⁸
The constance of his wife, he cast adown
His eyen two, and wonder'd how she may
In patience suffer all this array ;
And forth he went with dreary countenance ;
But to his heart it was full great pleasānce.

This ugly sergeant, in the samē wise
That he her daughter caught, right so hath he
(Or worse, if men can any worse devise,)
Y-bent⁹ her son, that full was of beauty :
And ever-in-one¹⁰ so patient was she,
That she no cheerē made of heaviness,
But kiss'd her son, and after gan him bless.

Save this she prayed him, if that he might,
Her little son he would in earthē grave,¹¹
His tender limbēs, delicate to sight,
From fowlēs and from beastēs for to save.
But she none answer of him mightē have ;
He went his way, as him nothing ne raught,¹²
But to Bologna tenderly it brought.

The marquis wonder'd ever longer more
Upon her patience ; and, if that he
Not haddē soothly knowen theretefore

¹ Doubt.

² Expression of opinion.

³ Complain in my hearing.

⁴ Before.

⁵ Become outrageous, rave.

⁶ Advice.

⁷ Will.

⁸ Saw.

⁹ Seized.

¹⁰ Unvaryingly.

¹¹ Bury.

¹² Recked, cared.

¹³ Thought.

¹⁴ Disposition.

¹⁵ Steadfast, unmoved.

¹⁶ Stubborn, stern.

That perfectly her children loved she,
He would have ween'd¹³ that of some subtilty,
And of malice, or for cruel corāge,¹⁴
She haddē suffer'd this with sad¹⁵ visage.

But well he knew, that, next himself, certāin
She lov'd her children best in every wise.
But now of women would I askē fain,
If these assayēs mightē not suffice ?
What could a sturdy¹⁶ husband more devise
To prove her wifehood and her steadfastness,
And he continuing ev'r in sturdiness ?

But there be folk of such condition,
That, when they have a certain purpose take,
They cannot stint¹⁷ of their intention,
But, right as they were bound unto a stake,
They will not of their firstē purpose slake :¹⁸
Right so this marquis fully hath purpōs'd
To tempt his wife, as he was first dispos'd.

He waited, if by word or countenance
That she to him was changed of corāge :¹⁹
But never could he findē variance,
She was aye one in heart and in visage,
And aye the farther that she was in age,
The morē true (if that it were possible)
She was to him in love, and more penible.²⁰

For which it seemed thus, that of them two
There was but one will ; for, as Walter lest,²¹
The same pleasāncē was her lust also ;
And, God be thanked, all fell for the best.
She shewed well, for no worldly unrest,
A wife as of herself no thingē should
Will, in effect, but as her husband would.

The sland'r of Walter wondrous widē sprad,
That of a cruel heart he wickedly,
For²² he a poorē woman wedded had,
Had murder'd both his children privily :
Such murmur was among them commonly.
No wonder is : for to the people's ear
There came no word, but that they murder'd
were.

For which, whereas his people theretefore
Had lov'd him well, the sland'r of his diffame²³
Made them that they him hated theretefore.
To be a murd'rer is a hateful name.
But natheless, for earnest or for game,
He of his cruel purpose would not stent ;²⁴
To tempt his wife was set all his intent.

When that his daughter twelve year was of
age,

He to the Court of Rome, in subtle wise
Informed of his will, sent his messāge,²⁵
Commanding him such bullēs to devise
As to his cruel purpose may suffice,
How that the Popē, for his people's rest,
Bade him to wed another, if him lest.²⁶

I say he bade they shouldē counterfeit
The Pope's bullēs, making mentiōn
That he had leave his firstē wife to lete,²⁷
As by the Popē's dispensatiōn,

¹⁷ Cease.

¹⁸ Slacken, abate.

¹⁹ Spirit.

²⁰ Devoted, full of painstaking in duty.

²¹ Pleased.

²² Because.

²³ Evil repute, reproach.

²⁴ Desist, stop.

²⁵ Messenger ; for French "messenger."

²⁶ Pleased.

²⁷ Leave.

To stint¹ rancour and dissensi²on
Betwixt his people and him : thus spake the bull,
The which they havē published at full.

The rudē people, as no wonder is,
Weened³ full well that it had been right so :
But, when these tidings came to Griseldis,
I deemē that her heart was full of woe ;
But she, alikē sad⁴ for evermo',
Disposed was, this humble creatūre,
Th' adversity of fortune all t' endure ;

Abiding ever his lust and his pleasānce,
To whom that she was given, heart and all,
As to her very worldly suffisance.⁴
But, shortly if this story tell I shall,
The marquis written hath in special
A letter, in which he shewed his intent,
And secretly it to Bologna sent.

To th' earl of Panico, which haddē tho⁵
Wedded his sister, pray'd he specially
To bringē home again his children two
In honourable estate all openly :
But one thing he him prayed utterly,
That he to no wight, though men would in-
quere,

Shouldē not tell whose children that they were,
But say, the maiden should y-wedded be
Unto the marquis of Salūce anon.
And as this earl was prayed, so did he,
For, at day set, he on his way is gone
Toward Salūce, and lordēs many a one
In rich array, this maiden for to guide,—
Her youngē brother riding her beside.

Arrayed was toward⁶ her marriage
This freshē maiden, full of gemmēs clear ;
Her brother, which that seven year was of age,
Arrayed eke full fresh in his mannēre :
And thus, in great noblēss, and with glad cheer,
Toward Saluces shaping their journey,
From day to day they rode upon their way.

Pars Quinta.

Among all⁷ this, after his wick' usāge,
The marquis, yet his wife to temptē more
To the uttermost proof of her corāge,
Fully to have experience and lore⁸
If that she were as steadfast as before,
He on a day, in open audience,
Full boisterously said her this sentence :

" Certes, Griseld', I had enough pleasānce
To have you to my wife, for your goodness,
And for your truth, and for your obeisānce,
Not for your lineage, nor for your richēss ;
But now know I, in very soothfastness,
That in great lordship, if I well advise,
There is great servitude in sundry wise.

" I may not do as every ploughman may :
My people me constraineth for to take
Another wife, and cryeth day by day ;
And eke the Popē, rancour for to slake,
Consenteth it, that dare I undertake :

¹ Put an end to.

² Thought, believed.

³ Steadfast.

⁴ To the utmost extent of her power.

⁵ Then.

⁶ As if for.

⁷ While all this was going on.

⁸ Knowledge.

⁹ Immediately make vacant.

And truēly, thus much I will you say,
My newē wife is coming by the way.

" Be strong of heart, and void anon⁹ her
place ;

And thilkē¹⁰ dower that ye brought to me,
Take it again, I grant it of my grace.
Returnē to your father's house," quoth he ;
" No man may always have prosperity ;
With even heart I rede¹¹ you to endure
The stroke of fortune or of aventure."

And she again answer'd in patience :
" My Lord," quoth she, " I know, and knew
always,

How that betwixtē your magnificence
And my povert' no wight nor can nor may
Makē comparison, it is no nay ;¹²
I held me never digne¹³ in no mannēre
To be your wife, nor yet your chamberēre.¹⁴

" And in this house, where ye me lady made,
(The highē God take I for my witness,
And all so wisly¹⁵ he my soulē glade),
I never held me lady nor mistress,
But humble servant to your worthiness,
And ever shall, while that my life may dure,
Aboven every worldly creatūre.

" That ye so long, of your benignity,
Have holden me in honour and nobley,¹⁶
Where as I was not worthy for to be,
That thank I God and you, to whom I pray
Foryield¹⁷ it you ; there is no more to say :
Unto my father gladly will I wend,¹⁸
And with him dwell, unto my lifē's end,

" Where I was foster'd as a child full small ;
Till I be dead my life there will I lead,
A widow clean in body, heart, and all.
For since I gave to you my maidenhead,
And am your truē wife, it is no dread,¹⁹
God shieldē²⁰ such a lordē's wife to take
Another man to husband or to make.²¹

" And of your newē wife, God of his grace
So grant you weal and all prosperity :
For I will gladly yield to her my place,
In which that I was blissful wont to be.
For since it liketh you, my Lord," quoth she,
" That whilom weren all mine heartē's rest,
That I shall go, I will go when you lest.

" But whereas ye me proffer such dowaire
As I first brought, it is well in my mind,
It was my wretched clothēs, nothing fair,
The which to me were hard now for to find.
O goodē God ! how gentle and how kind
Ye seemed by your speech and your visāge,
The day that maked was our marriage !

" But sooth is said,—algate²² I find it true,
For in effect it proved is on me,—
Love is not old as when that it is new.
But certes, Lord, for no adversity,
To dien in this case, it shall not be
That e'er in word or work I shall repent
That I you gave mine heart in whole intent.

¹⁰ That.

¹¹ Counsel.

¹² Not to be denied.

¹³ Worthy.

¹⁴ Chamber-maid.

¹⁵ Surely.

¹⁶ Nobility.

¹⁷ Recompense, reward.

¹⁸ Go.

¹⁹ Doubt.

²⁰ Forbid.

²¹ Mate.

²² At all events.

"My Lord, ye know that in my father's place
Ye did me strip out of my poor¹ weed,
And richly ye clad me of your grace;
To you brought I nought ell²s, out of dread,
But faith, and nakedness, and maidenhead;
And here again your clothing I restore,
And eke your wedding ring for evermore.

"The remnant of your jewels ready be
Within your chamber, I dare safely sayn:
Naked out of my father's house," quoth she,
"I came, and naked I must turn again.
All your pleasanc³e would I follow fain:²
But yet I hope it be not your intent
That smockless³ I out of your palace went.

"Ye could not do so dishonest⁴ a thing,
That thilk⁵ womb, in which your children lay,
Should⁶e before the people, in my walking,
Be seen all bare: and therefore I you pray,
Let me not like a worm go by the way:
Remember you, mine owen Lord so dear,
I was your wife, though I unworthy were.

"Wherefore, in guerdon⁶ of my maidenhead,
Which that I brought and not again I bear,
As vouchsafe to give me to my meed⁶
But such a smock as I was wont to wear,
That I therewith may wrie⁷ the womb of her
That was your wife: and here I take my leave
Of you, mine owen Lord, lest I you grieve."

"The smock," quoth he, "that thou hast on
thy back,
Let it be still, and bear it forth with thee."
But well unneth⁸s thilk⁵ word he spake,
But went his way for ruth and for pity.
Before the folk herself⁶e stripped she,
And in her smock, with foot and head all bare,
Toward her father's house forth is she fare.⁹

The folk her follow'd weeping on her way,
And fortune aye they cursed as they gon:¹⁰
But she from weeping kept her eyen drey,¹¹
Nor in this tim⁶e word⁶e spake she none.
Her father, that this tiding heard anon,
Cursed the day and tim⁶e, that nat⁶ure
Shope¹² him to be a living creat⁶ure.

For, out of doubt, this old⁶e poor⁶e man
Was ever in susp⁶ect of her marri⁶age:
For ever deem'd he, since it first began,
That when the lord fulfill'd had his cor⁶age,¹³
He would⁶e think it were a dispar⁶age¹⁴
To his estate, so low for to alight,
And void⁶e¹⁵ her as soon as e'er he might.

Against¹⁶ his daughter hastily went he
(For he by noise of folk knew her coming),
And with her old⁶e coat, as it might be,
He cover'd her, full sorrowfully weeping:
But on her body might he it not bring,¹⁷
For rud⁶e was the cloth, and more of age
By day⁶s fele¹⁸ than at her marri⁶age.

Thus with her father for a certain space

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Raiment. | 2 Cheerfully. | |
| 3 Naked. | 4 Dishonourable. | 5 That. |
| 6 Reward. | 7 Cover. | 8 With difficulty. |
| 9 Gone. | 10 Go. | 11 Dry. |
| 12 Formed, ordained. | | |
| 13 Had gratified his inclination. | | |
| 14 Disparagement. | 15 Dismiss, get rid of. | |
| 16 To meet. | 17 Cause it to meet. | |

Dwelled this flow'r of wifely patience,
That neither by her words nor by her face,
Before the folk nor eke in their absence,
Ne shewed she that her was done offence,
Nor of her high estate no rémembrance
Ne hadd⁶e she, as by¹⁹ her countenance.

No wonder is, for in her great estate
Her ghost²⁰ was ever in plain²¹ humility;
No tender mouth, no heart⁶e delicate,
No pomp, and no sembl⁶ant of royalty;
But full of patient benignity,
Discreet and prid⁶less, aye honour⁶able,
And to her husband ever meek and stable.

Men speak of Job, and most for his humbl⁶ess,
As clerk⁶s, when them list, can well indite,
Namely²² of men; but, as in soothfastness,
Though clerk⁶s prais⁶e women but a lite,²³
There can no man in humbl⁶ess him acquite
As women can, nor can be half so true
As women be, but it be fall of new.²⁴

Pars Sexta.

From Bologn' is the earl of Panio' come,
Of which the fame up sprang to more and less;
And to the people's ear⁶s all and some
Was known eke, that a new⁶e marchioness
He with him brought, in such pomp and rich⁶ess
That never was there seen with mann⁶e's eye
So noble array in all West Lombardy.

The marquis, which that shope²⁵ and knew
all this,
Ere that the earl was come, sent his mess⁶age²⁶
For thilk⁵ poor⁶e sely²⁷ Griseldis;
And she, with humble heart and glad vis⁶age,
Nor with no swelling thought in her cor⁶age,²⁸
Came at his hest,²⁹ and on her knees her set,
And rev'rently and wisely she him gret.³⁰

"Griseld'," quoth he, "my will is utterly,
This maiden, that shall wedded be to me,
Received be to-morrow as royally
As it possible is in my house to be;
And eke that every wight in his degree
Have his estate³¹ in sitting and service,
And in high pleasance, as I can devise.

"I have no women sufficient, cert⁶ain,
The chambers to array in ordinance
After my lust;³² and therefore would I fain
That thine were all such manner governance:
Thou knowest eke of old all my pleas⁶ance;
Though thine array be bad, and ill besey,³³
Do thou thy dévoir at the least⁶e way."³⁴

"Not only, Lord, that I am glad," quoth she,
"To do your lust, but I desire also
You for to serve and please in my degrec,
Without⁶e fainting, and shall evermo':
Nor ever for no weal, nor for no woe,
Ne shall the ghost³⁵ within mine heart⁶e stent³⁶
To love you best with all my true intent."

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 18 Many; German, "viel." | 19 To judge from. |
| 20 Spirit. | 21 Full. |
| 22 Little. | 23 Particularly. |
| 24 Unless it has lately come to pass. | |
| 25 Arranged. | 26 Messenger. |
| 27 Mind. | 28 Innocent. |
| 29 Command. | 30 Greeted. |
| 31 What befits his condition. | 32 Pleasure. |
| 33 Poor to look on. | 34 In the quickest manner. |
| 35 Spirit. | 36 Cease. |

And with that word she gan the house to dight,¹
 And tables for to set, and beds to make,
 And pained her² to do all that she might,
 Praying the chamberfres for Godde's sake
 To hasten them, and faste sweep and shake,
 And she the most servicable of all
 Hath ev'ry chamber arrayed, and his hall.

Abouten undern³ gan the carl alight,
 That with him brought these noble children
 tway;

For which the people ran to see the sight
 Of their array, so richely besey;⁴
 And then at erst⁵ amonges them they say,
 That Walter was no fool, though that him lest⁶
 To change his wife; for it was for the best.

For she is fairer, as they decmen⁷ all,
 Than is Griseld', and more tender of age,
 And fairer fruit between them shoulde fall,
 And more pleasant, for her high lineage:
 Her brother eke so fair was of visage,
 That them to see the people hath caught plea-
 sance,

Commending now the marquis' governance.

"O stormy people, unsad⁸ and ev'r untrue,
 And undiscreef, and changing as a vane,
 Delighting ev'r in rumour that is new,
 For like the moon so waxe ye and wane:
 Aye full of clapping, dear enough a jane,⁹
 Your doom¹⁰ is false, your constance evil
 preveth,¹¹

A full great fool is he that you believeth."

Thus said the sad¹² folk in that city,
 When that the people gazed up and down;
 For they were glad, right for the novelty,
 To have a newe lady of their town.
 No more of this now make I mentioin,
 But to Griseld' again I will me dress,
 And tell her constancy and business.

Full busy was Griseld' in ev'ry thing
 That to the feast was appertinent;
 Right nought was she abash'd¹³ of her clothing,
 Though it were rude, and somedeal eke to-
 rent;¹⁴

But with glad cheer unto the gate she went
 With other folk, to greet the marchioness,
 And after that did forth her business.

With so glad cheer his guestes she receiv'd
 And so conningly¹⁵ each in his degree,
 That no defaulte no man apperceiv'd,
 But aye they wonder'd what she might be
 That in so poor array was for to see,
 And coud¹⁶ such honour and reverence;
 And worthily they prais¹⁷ her prudence.

In all this mean¹⁸ while she not stent¹⁹:
 This maid, and eke her brother, to commend
 With all her heart in full benign intent,

So well, that no man could her praise amend:
 But at the last, when that these lordes wend²⁰
 To sitt²¹ down to meat, he gan to call
 Griseld', as she was busy in the hall.

"Griseld'," quoth he, as it were in his play,
 "How liketh thee my wife, and her beauty?"
 "Right well, my Lord," quoth she, "for, in
 good fay,²²

A fairer saw I never none than she:
 I pray to God give you prosperity;
 And so I hope, that he will to you send
 Pleasance enough unto your lives' end.

"One thing beseech I you, and warn also,
 That ye not prick²³ with no torm²⁴enting
 This tender maiden, as ye have done me:²⁵
 For she is foster'd in her nourishing
 More tenderly, and, to my supposing,
 She might²⁶ not adversity endure
 As could a poor²⁷ foster'd creature."

And when this Walter saw her patience,
 Her gladd²⁸ cheer, and no malice at all,
 And²⁹ he so often had her done offence,
 And she aye sad³⁰ and constant as a wall,
 Continuing ev'r her innocence o'er all,
 The sturdy marquis gan his heart³¹ dress³²
 To rue upon her wifely steadfastness.

"This is enough, Griselda mine," quoth he,
 "Be now no more aghast, nor evil paid,³³
 I have thy faith and thy benignity
 As well as ever woman was, assay'd,
 In great estate and poor³⁴ly array'd:
 Now know I, dear³⁵ wife, thy steadfastness;
 And her in arms he took, and gan to kiss.

And she for wonder took of it no keep;³⁶
 She heard³⁷ not what thing he to her said:
 She far'd as she had start out of a sleep,
 Till she out of her mazedness abraid.³⁸
 "Griseld'," quoth he, "by God that for us
 died,

Thou art my wif³⁹, none other I have,
 Nor ever had, as God my soul⁴⁰ save.

"This is thy daughter, which thou hast sup-
 pos'd

To be my wife; that other faithfully
 Shall be mine heir, as I have aye dispos'd;
 Thou bare them of thy body truly:
 At Bologna kept I them privily:
 Take them again, for now may'st thou not say
 That thou hast lorn⁴¹ none of thy children
 tway.

"And folk, that otherwise have said of me,
 I warn them well, that I have done this deed
 For no malice, nor for no cruelty,
 But to assay in thee thy womanhead:
 And not to slay my children (God forbid),
 But for to keep them privily and still,
 Till I thy purpose knew, and all thy will."

¹ Arrange. ² Took all pains, used every exertion.

³ Eventide, or afternoon; though by some "undern" is understood as dinner-time—9 A.M.

⁴ So rich to behold.

⁵ For the first time.

⁶ Pleased.

⁷ Think.

⁸ Variable.

⁹ A small coin of little value.

¹⁰ Judgment.

¹¹ Proveth.

¹² Sedate.

¹³ Ashamed.

¹⁴ Torn.

¹⁵ Cleverly, skillfully.

¹⁶ Knew, understood how to do.

¹⁷ Ceased.

¹⁸ Thought.

¹⁹ Faith.

²⁰ Me. "This is one of the most licentious corrup-
 tions of orthography," says Tyrwhitt, "that I remem-
 ber to have observed in Chaucer;" but such liberties
 were common among the European poets of his time,
 when there was an extreme lack of certainty in ortho-
 graphy.

²¹ Although.

²² Steadfast.

²³ Prepare, incline.

²⁴ Afraid nor displeased.

²⁵ Notice, heed.

²⁶ Awoke.

²⁷ Lost.

When she this heard, in swoon adown she
falleth

For piteous joy ; and after her swooning,
She both her youngē children to her calleth,
And in her armēs piteously weeping
Embraced them, and tenderly kissing,
Full like a mother, with her saltē tears
She bathed both their visage and their hairs.

O, what a piteous thing it was to see
Her swooning, and her humble voice to hear !
“ *Grand mercy*, Lord, God thank it you,” quoth
she,

“ That ye have saved me my children dear ;
Now reck¹ I never to be dead right here ;
Since I stand in your love, and in your grace,
No force of² death, nor when my spirit pace.³”

“ O tender, O dear, O young children mine,
Your woeful mother weened steadfastly⁴
That cruel houndēs, or some foul vermine,
Had eaten you ; but God of his mercy,
And your benignē father, tenderly
Have done you keep : ”⁵ and in that samē
stound,⁶

All suddenly she swapt⁷ down to the ground.

And in her swoon so sadly⁸ holdeth she
Her children two, when she gan them embrace,
That with great sleight⁹ and great difficulty
The children from her arm they can arace,¹⁰
O ! many a tear on many a piteous face
Down ran of them that stoodē her beside,
Unneth¹¹ aboutē her might they abide.

Walter her gladdeth, and her sorrow alaketh :¹²
She riseth up abashed¹³ from her trance,
And every wight her joy and feastē maketh,
Till she hath caught again her countenance.
Walter her doth so faithfully pleasānce,
That it was dainty for to see the cheer
Betwixt them two, since they be met in
fere.¹⁴

The ladies, when that they their timē sey,¹⁵
Have taken her, and into chamber gone,
And stripped her out of her rude array,
And in a cloth of gold that brightly shone,
And with a crown of many a richē stone
Upon her head, they into hall her brought :
And there she was honoured as her ought.

Thus had this piteous day a blissful end ;
For every man and woman did his might
This day in mirth and revel to dispend,
Till on the welkin¹⁶ shone the starrēs bright :
For more solēmn in every mannē's sight
This feastē was, and greater of coostage,¹⁷
Than was the revel of her marriage.

Full many a year in high prosperity
Lived these two in concord and in rest ;
And richēly his daughter married he
Unto a lord, one of the worthiest
Of all Itāle ; and then in peace and rest

His wifē's father in his court he kept,
Till that the soul out of his body crept.

His son succeeded in his heritage,
In rest and peace, after his father's day :
And fortunate was eke in marriage,
All¹⁸ he put not his wife in great assay :
This world is not so strong, it is no nay,¹⁹
As it hath been in oldē timēs yore ;
And hearken what this author saith, therefore :

This story is said,²⁰ not for that wivēs should
Follow Griselda in humility,
For it were importāble²¹ though they would ;
But for that every wight in his degree
Shouldē be constant in adversity,
As was Griselda ; therefore Petrarch writeth
This story, which with high style he inditeth.

For, since a woman was so patient
Unto a mortal man, well more we ought
Receiven all in gree²² that God us sent.
For great skill is he proved that he wrought :²³
But he tempteth no man that he hath bought,
As saith Saint James, if ye his 'pistle read ;
He proveth folk all day, it is no dread.²⁴

And suffereth us, for our exercise,
With sharpē scourges of adversity
Full often to be beat in sundry wise ;
Not for to know our will, for certes he,
Ere we were born, knew all our frailty ;
And for our best is all his governance ;
Let us then live in virtuous sufferance.

But one word, lordings, hearken, ere I go :
It were full hard to findē now-a-days
In all a town Griseldas three or two :
For, if that they were put to such assays,
The gold of them hath now so bad allays²⁵
With brass, that though the coin be fair at eye,²⁶
It wouldē rather break in two than ply.²⁷

For which here, for the Wifē's love of Bath, —
Whose life and all her sex may God maintain
In high mast'ry, and ellēs were it scath,²⁸ —
I will, with lusty heartē fresh and green,
Say you a song to gladden you, I ween :
And let us stint of earnestful mattēre.
Hearken my song, that saith in this mannēre.

L'Envoy of Chaucer.

“ Griseld' is dead, and eke her patience,
And both at once are buried in Itāle :
For which I cry in open audience,
No wedded man so hardy be t' assail
His wifē's patience, in trust to find
Griselda's, for in certain he shall fail.

“ O noble wivēs, full of high prudence,
Let no humility your tonguēs nail :
Nor let no clerk have cause or diligence
To write of you a story of such marvail,

1 Care. 2 No matter for. 3 Departs.
4 Believed firmly. 5 Caused you to be preserved.
6 Instant. 7 Fell. 8 Firmly.
9 Art. 10 Pluck away, withdraw.
11 Scarcely. 12 Assuages. 13 Astonished.
14 Together. 15 Saw. 16 Firmament.
17 Expense ; sumptuousness. 18 Although.

19 Not to be denied.
20 The fourteen lines that follow are translated almost
literally from Petrarch's Latin.
21 Impossible ; not to be borne. 22 Good-will.
23 For it is most reasonable that He should prove or
test that which He made. 24 Doubt. 25 Alloys.
26 To view. 27 Bend. 28 Damage, pity.

As of Griselda patient and kind,
Lest Chichevache¹ you swallow in her entrail.

"Follow Echo, that holdeth no silence,
But ever answereth at the countertail;²
Be not bedaffed³ for your innocence,
But sharply take on you the governail;⁴
Imprinte well this lesson in your mind,
For common profit, since it may avail.

"Ye archiwivës,⁵ stand aye at defence,
Since ye be strong as is a great camail,⁶
Nor suffer not that men do you offence.
And slender wivës, feeble in battail,
Be eager as a tiger yond in Ind;
Aye clapping as a mill, I you counsail.

"Nor dread them not, nor do them reverence;
For though thine husband armed be in mail,
The arrows of thy crabbed eloquence
Shall pierce his breast, and eke his aventail;⁷
In jealousy I rede⁸ eke thou him bind,
And thou shalt make him couch⁹ as doth a quail.

"If thou be fair, where folk be in presençe
Shew thou thy visage and thine apparail:
If thou be foul, be free of thy dispence;
To get thee friendës aye do thy travail:
Be aye of cheer as light as leaf on lind,¹⁰
And let him care, and weep, and wring, and wail."

THE MERCHANT'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.¹¹

"WEEPING and wailing, care and other sorrow,
I have enough, on even and on morrow,"
Quoth the Merchánt, "and so have other mo',
That wedded be; I trow¹² that it be so;
For well I wot it fareth so by me.
I have a wife, the worstë that may be,
For though the fiend to her y-coupled were,

¹ Chichevache, in old popular fable, was a monster that fed only on good women, and was always very thin from scarcity of such food; a corresponding monster, Bycorne, fed only on obedient and kind husbands, and was always fat. The origin of the fable was French; but Lydgate has a ballad on the subject. "Chichevache" literally means "niggardly" or "greedy cow."

² Counter-tally or counter-foil; something exactly corresponding.

³ Befooled.

⁴ Helm.

⁵ Wives of rank.

⁶ Camel.

⁷ Forepart of a helmet, vizor.

⁸ Advise.

⁹ Submit, shrink.

¹⁰ Linden, lime-tree.

¹¹ Though the manner in which the Merchant takes up the closing words of the Envoy to the Clerk's Tale, and refers to the patience of Griselda, seems to prove beyond doubt that the order of the Tales in the text is the right one, yet in some manuscripts of good authority the Franklin's Tale follows the Clerk's, and the Envoy is concluded by this stanza:—

"This worthy Clerk when ended was his tale,
Our Hostë said, and swore by cockë's bones
'Me lever were than a barrel of ale
My wife at home had heard this legend once;
This is a gentle talë for the nonce;
As to my purpose, wistë ye my will.
But thing that will not be, let it be still.'"

In other manuscripts of less authority, the Host proceeds, in two similar stanzas, to impose a Tale on the Franklin; but Tyrwhitt is probably right in setting

She would him overmatch, I dare well swear.
Why should I you rehearse in special
Her high malice? she is a shrew at all.¹³
There is a long and largë difference
Betwixt Griselda's greatë patience,
And of my wife the passing cruelty.
Were I unbounden, all so may I thé,¹⁴
I wouldë never eft¹⁵ come in the snare.
We wedded men live in sorrow and care;
Assay it whoso will, and he shall find
That I say sooth, by Saint Thomas of Ind,
As for the morë part; I say not all,—
God shieldë¹⁶ that it shouldë so befall.
Ah! good Sir Host, I have y-wedded be
These moneths two, and morë not, pardie;
And yet I trow¹² that he that all his life
Wifeless hath been, though that men would
him rive

Into the heartë, could in no mannëre
Tellë so much sorrow, as I you here
Could tellen of my wifë's cursedness."¹⁷

"Now," quoth our Host, "Merchánt, so God
you bless,

Since ye so muchë knowen of that art,
Full heartily I pray you tell us part."

"Gladly," quoth he; "but of mine owen
sore,

For sorry heart, I tellë may no more."

THE TALE.¹⁸

Whilom there was dwelling in Lombardy
A worthy knight, that born was at Pavie,
In which he liv'd in great prosperity;
And forty years a wifeless man was he,
And follow'd aye his bodily delight
On women, where as was his appetite,
As do these foolës that be seculeres.¹⁹
And, when that he was passed sixty years,
Were it for holiness, or for dotage,
I cannot say, but such a great oorage²⁰
Haddë this knight to be a wedded man,

them aside as spurious, and in admitting the genuineness of the first only, if it be supposed that Chaucer forgot to cancel it when he had decided on another mode of connecting the Merchant's with the Clerk's Tale.

¹² Believe.

¹³ Thoroughly, in everything, wicked.

¹⁴ So may I thrive!

¹⁵ Again.

¹⁶ Guard, forbid.

¹⁷ Wickedness, shrewishness.

¹⁸ If, as is probable, this Tale was translated from the French, the original is not now extant. Tyrwhitt remarks that the scene "is laid in Italy, but none of the names, except Damian and Justin, seem to be Italian, but rather made at pleasure; so that I doubt whether the story be really of Italian growth. The adventure of the pear-tree I find in a small collection of Latin fables, written by one Adolphus, in elegiac verses of his fashion, in the year 1315. . . . Whatever was the real origin of the Tale, the machinery of the fairies, which Chaucer has used so happily, was probably added by himself; and, indeed, I cannot help thinking that his Pluto and Proserpina were the true progenitors of Oberon and Titania; or rather, that they themselves have, once at least, deigned to revisit our poetical system under the latter names."

¹⁹ Of the laity; but perhaps, since the word is of two-fold meaning, Chaucer intends a hit at the secular clergy, who, unlike the regular orders, did not live separate from the world, but shared in all its interests and pleasures—all the more easily and freely, that they had not the civil restraint of marriage.

²⁰ Inclination.

That day and night he did all that he can
To espy where that he might wedded be ;
Praying our Lord to grantē him, that he
Mightē once knowen of that blissful life
That is betwixt a husband and his wife,
And for to live under that holy bond
With which God firstē man and woman bond.
"None other life," said he, "is worth a bean ;
For wedlock is so easy, and so clean,
That in this world it is a paradise."
Thus said this oldē knight, that was so wise.
And certainly, as sooth¹ as God is king,
To take a wife it is a glorious thing,
And namely² when a man is old and hoar,
Then is a wife the fruit of his treasōr ;
Then should he take a young wife and a fair,
On which he might engender him an heir,
And lead his life in joy and in solace ;³
Whereas these bachelors singen "Alas !"
When that they find any adversity
In love, which is but childish vanity.
And truēly it sits⁴ well to be so,
That bachelors have often pain and woe :
On brittle ground they build, and brittleness
They findē, when they weenē sickness :⁵
They live but as a bird or as a beast,
In liberty, and under no arrest ;⁶
Whereas a wedded man in his estate
Liveth a life blissful and ordinate,
Under the yoke of marriage y-bound ;
Well may his heart in joy and bliss abound.
For who can be so buxom⁷ as a wife ?
Who is so true, and eke so attentīve
To keep⁸ him, sick and whole, as is his make ?⁹
For weal or woe she will him not forsake :
She is not weary him to love and serve,
Though that he lie bedrid until he sterve.¹⁰
And yet some clerkēs say it is not so ;
Of which he, Theophrast, is one of tho :¹¹
What force¹² though Theophrast list for to lie ?
"Takē no wife," quoth he, "for husbandry,¹³
As for to spare in household thy dispençe ;
A truē servant doth more diligence
Thy good to keep, than doth thine owen wife,
For she will claim a half part all her life.
And if that thou be sick, so God me save,
Thy very friendē, or a truē knave,¹⁴
Will keep thee bet¹⁵ than she, that waiteth aye
After¹⁶ thy good, and hath done many a day."
This sentence, and a hundred timēs worse,
Writeth this man, there God his bonēs curse.
But take no keep¹⁷ of all such vanity,
Defy¹⁸ Theophrast, and hearken to me.

A wife is Goddē's giftē verily ;
All other manner giftēs hardily,¹⁹
As landēs, rentēs, pasture, or commūne,²⁰
Or mebles,²¹ all be giftēs of fortune,

That passen as a shadow on the wall :
But dread²² thou not, if plainly speak I shall,
A wife will last, and in thine house endure,
Well longer than thee list, paraventure.²³
Marriage is a full great sacrament ;
He which that hath no wife, I hold him shent ;²⁴
He liveth helpless, and all desolate
(I speak of folk in secular estate²⁵) :
And hearken why, — I say not this for nought, —
That woman is for mannē's help y-wrought.
The highē God, when he had Adam maked,
And saw him all alonē belly naked,
God of his greatē goodness saidē then,
Let us now make a help unto this man
Like to himself ; and then he made him Eve.
Here may ye see, and hereby may ye preve,²⁶
That a wife is man's help and his comfort,
His paradise terrestre and his disport.
So buxom²⁷ and so virtuous is she,
They mustē needēs live in unity ;
One flesh they be, and one blood, as I guess,
With but one heart in weal and in distress.
A wife ? Ah ! Saint Marf, *ben'dicite*,
How might a man have any adversity
That hath a wife ? certes I cannot say
The bliss the which that is betwixt them tway,
There may no tongue it tell, or heartē think.
If he be poor, she helpeth him to swink ;²⁸
She keeps his good, and wasteth never a deal ;²⁹
All that her husband list, her liketh³⁰ well ;
She saith not onēs Nay, when he saith Yea ;
"Do this," saith he ; "All ready, Sir," saith she.
O blissful order, wedlock precious !
Thou art so merry, and eke so virtuous,
And so commended and approved eke,
That every man that holds him worth a leek
Upon his barē knees ought all his life
To thank his God, that him hath sent a wife ;
Or ellēs pray to God him for to send
A wife, to last unto his lifē's end.
For then his life is set in sickness,³¹
He may not be deceived, as I guess,
So that he work after his wifē's rede ;³²
Then may he boldēly bear up his head,
They be so true, and therewithal so wise.
For which, if thou wilt worken as the wise,
Do alway so as women will thee rede.³³

Lo how that Jacob, as these clerkēs read,
By good counsel of his mother Rebecc'
Boundē the kiddē's skin about his neck ;
For which his father's benison³⁴ he wan.
Lo Judith, as the story tellē can,
By good counsel she Goddē's people kept,
And slew him, Holofernes, while he slept.
Lo Abigail, by good counsēl, how she
Saved her husband Nabal, when that he
Should have been slain. And lo, Esther also

1 True. 2 Especially.
3 Mirth, delight. 4 Becomes, befits.
5 Think that there is security.
6 Check, control. 7 Obedient.
8 Care for, attend to. 9 Mate.
10 Die. 11 Those. 12 What matter.
13 Thrift. This and the next eight lines are taken
from the "Liber aureolus Theophrasti de nuptiis,"
quoted by Hieronymus, "Contra Jovinianum," and
thence again by John of Salisbury.

14 Servant. 15 Better.
16 Waits on, longs to have. 17 Heed, notice.
18 Distrust. 19 Truly. 20 Common land.
21 Movables, furniture, &c. ; French, "meubles."
22 Doubt. 23 Perhaps. 24 Ruined.
25 Who are not of the clergy. 26 Prove.
27 Obedient, complying. 28 Labour.
29 Wit. 30 Pleaseth.
31 Security. 32 Counsel.
33 Benediction.

By counsel good deliver'd out of woe
 The people of God, and made him, Mardocheé,
 Of Assuere enhanced¹ for to be.
 There is nothing in gree superlative²
 (As saith Senec) above a humble wife.
 Suffer thy wife's tongue, as Cato bit;³
 She shall command, and thou shalt suffer it,
 And yet she will obey of courtesy.
 A wife is keeper of thine husbandry:
 Well may the sické man bewail and weep,
 There as there is no wife the house to keep.
 I warné thee, if wisely thou wilt wirc,⁴
 Love well thy wife, as Christ loveth his church:
 Thou lov'st thyself, if thou lovest thy wife.
 No man hateth his flesh, but in his life
 He fost'reth it; and therefore bid I thee
 Cherish thy wife, or thou shalt never thé.⁵
 Husband and wife, what so men jape or play,⁶
 Of worldly folk holdé the sicker⁷ way;
 They be so knit, there may no harm betide,
 And namély⁸ upon the wife's side.

For which this January, of whom I told,
 Consider'd hath, within his dayés old,
 The lusty life, the virtuous quiet,
 That is in marriagé honey-sweet.
 And for his friends upon a day he sent
 To tell them the effect of his intent.
 With facé sad,⁹ his tale he hath them told:
 He saidé, "Friendés, I am hoar and old,
 And almost (God wot) on my pitté's¹⁰ brink,
 Upon my soulé somewhat must I think.
 I have my body foolishly dispended,
 Blessed be God that it shall be amended;
 For I will be certáin a wedded man,
 And that anon in all the haste I can,
 Unto some maiden, fair and tender of age;
 I pray you shapé¹¹ for my marriagé
 All suddenly, for I will not abide:
 And I will fond¹² to éspy, on my side,
 To whom I may be wedded hastily.
 But forasmuch as ye be more than I,
 Ye shallé rather¹³ such a thing espy
 Than I, and where me best were to ally.
 But one thing warn I you, my friendés dear,
 I will none old wife have in no mannére:
 She shall not passé sixteen year certáin.
 Old fish and youngé flesh would I have fain.
 Better," quoth he, "a pike than a pickerel,¹⁴
 And better than old beef is tender veal.
 I will no woman thirty year of age,
 It is but beanéstraw and great forége.
 And eke these oldé widows (God it wot)
 They conné¹⁵ so much craft on Wadé's boat,¹⁶
 So muché brooké harm¹⁷ when that them lest,¹⁸
 That with them should I never live in rest.
 For sundry schoolés maké subtle clerkés;

¹ Advanced in dignity.

² To be esteemed in the highest degree.

³ Bade.

⁴ Work.

⁵ Thrive.

⁶ Let men jest and laugh as they will.

⁷ Sure.

⁸ Especially.

⁹ Grave, earnest.

¹⁰ Grave's.

¹¹ Arrange, contrive.

¹² Try.

¹³ Sooner.

¹⁴ Young pike.

¹⁵ Know.

¹⁶ "Wade's boat" was called Guingelot; and in it, according to the old romance, the owner underwent a long series of wild adventures, and performed many strange exploits. The romance is lost, and therefore the exact force of the phrase in the text is uncertain;

Woman of many schoolés half a clerk is.
 But certainly a young thing men may guy,¹⁹
 Right as men may warm wax with handés
 ply.²⁰

Wherefore I say you plainly in a clause,
 I will none old wife have, right for this cause.
 For if so were I haddé such mischance,
 That I in her could havé no pleasance,
 Then should I lead my life in avoutrie,²¹
 And go straight to the devil when I die.
 Nor children should I none upon her gotten:
 Yet were me lever²² boundés had me eaten
 Than that mine heritagé shouldé fall
 In strangé hands: and this I tell you all.
 I doubté not I know the causé why
 Men shouldé wed: and farthermore know I
 There speaketh many a man of marriagé
 That knows no more of it than doth my page,
 For what causes a man should take a wife.
 If he ne may not livé chaste his life,
 Take him a wife with great devotiún,
 Because of lawful procreatiún
 Of children, to th' honoúr of God above,
 And not only for paramour or love;
 And for they shouldé lechery eschew,
 And yield their debté when that it is due:
 Or for that each of them should help the other
 In mischief,²³ as a sister shall the brother,
 And live in chastity full holily.
 But, Sirés, by your leave, that am not I,
 For, God be thanked, I dare make avaunt,²⁴
 I feel my limbés stark²⁵ and suffisant
 To do all that a man belongeth to:
 I wot myselfé best what I may do.
 Though I be hoar, I fare as doth a tree,
 That blossoms ere the fruit y-waxen²⁶ be;
 The blossomy tree is neither dry nor dead;
 I feel me nowhere hoar but on my head.
 Mine heart and all my limbés are as green
 As laurel through the year is for to seen.²⁷
 And, since that ye have heard all mine intent,
 I pray you to my will ye would assent."
 Diversé men diversély him told
 Of marriagé many examples old;
 Some blamed it, some praised it, certáin;
 But at the lasté, shortly for to sayn
 (As all day²⁸ falleth altercatiún
 Betwixté friends in disputatiún),
 There fell a strife betwixt his brethren two,
 Of which that one was called Placebo,
 Justinus soothly called was that other.
 Placebo said; "O January, brother,
 Full little need have ye, my lord so dear,
 Counsel to ask of any that is here:
 But that ye be so full of sapience,
 That you not liketh, for your high prudéce,

but Mr Wright seems to be warranted in supposing that Wade's adventures were cited as examples of craft and cunning—that the hero, in fact, was a kind of Northern Ulysses. It is possible that to the same source we may trace the proverbial phrase, found in Chaucer's "Remedy of Love," to "bear Watt's pack"—signifying to be duped or beguiled.

¹⁷ So much mischief can they perform, employ.

¹⁸ Pleases.

¹⁹ Guide.

²⁰ Bend, mould.

²¹ Adultery.

²² I would rather.

²³ Trouble.

²⁴ Boast.

²⁵ Strong.

²⁶ Grown.

²⁷ See.

²⁸ Constantly, every day.

To waivē¹ from the word of Solomon.
 This word said he unto us every one ;
 Work allē thing by counsel,—thus said he,—
 And thenne shalt thou not repentē thee.
 But though that Solomon spake such a word,
 Mine owen dearē brother and my lord,
 So wialy² God my soulē bring at rest,
 I hold your owen counsel is the best.
 For, brother mine, take of me this motive ;³
 I have now been a court-man all my life,
 And, God it wot, though I unworthy be,
 I havē standen in full great degree
 Aboutē lordēs of full high estate ;
 Yet had I ne'er with none of them debate ;
 I never them contráried truēly.
 I know well that my lord can⁴ more than I ;
 What that he saith, I hold it firm and stable,
 I say the same, or else a thing sembláble.
 A full great fool is any counsellor
 That serveth any lord of high honoúr,
 That dare presume, or onēs thinken it,
 That his counsel should pass his lordē's wit.
 Nay, lordēs be no foolēs, by my fay.
 Ye have yourselfē shewed here to-day
 So high sentēce,⁵ so holily and well,
 That I consent, and cónfirm every deal⁶
 Your wordēs all, and your opinioún.
 By God, there is no man in all this town
 Nor in Itále, could better have y-said :
 Christ holds him of this counsel well apaid.⁷
 And truēly it is a high couráge
 Of any man that stopen⁸ is in age,
 To take a young wife, by my father's kin ;
 Your heartē hangeth on a jolly pin.
 Do now in this matter right as you lest,
 For finally I hold it for the best."

Justinus, that aye stillē sat and heard,
 Right in this wise to Placebo answer'd.
 "Now, brother mine, be patient I pray,
 Since ye have said, and hearken what I say.
 Senec, among his other wordēs wise,
 Saith, that a man ought him right well advise,⁹
 To whom he gives his land or his chattél.
 And since I ought advisē me right well
 To whom I give my good away from me,
 Well more I ought advisē me, pardie,
 To whom I give my body : for alway
 I warn you well it is no childē's play
 To take a wife without advisēment.
 Men must inquirē (this is mine assent)
 Whe'er she be wise, or sober, or dronkelew,¹⁰
 Or proud, or any other ways a shrew,
 A chidester,¹¹ or a waster of thy good,
 Or rich or poor ; or else a man is wood.¹²
 Albeit so, that no man findē shall
 None in this world, that trotteth whole in all,¹³
 Nor man, nor beast, such as men can devise,¹⁴
 But natheless it ought enough suffice
 With any wife, if so were that she had

More goodē thewēs¹⁵ than her vices bad :
 And all this asketh leisure to inquere.
 For, God it wot, I have wept many a tear
 Full privily, since I have had a wife.
 Praise whoso will a wedded mannē's life,
 Certes, I find in it but cost and care,
 And observánces of all blisses bare.
 And yet, God wot, my neighébours about,
 And namēly¹⁶ of women many a rout,¹⁷
 Say that I have the mostē steadfast wife,
 And ake the meekest one, that beareth life.
 But I know best where wringeth¹⁸ me my shoe.
 Ye may for me right as you likē do.
 Advisē you, ye be a man of age,
 How that ye enter into marriáge ;
 And namēly¹⁶ with a young wife and a fair.
 By him that madē water, fire, earth, air,
 The youngest man that is in all this rout¹⁷
 Is busy enough to bringen it about
 To have his wife alonē, trustē me :
 Ye shall not please her fully yearēs three,
 This is to say, to do her full pleasánce.
 A wife asketh full many an observánce.
 I pray you that ye be not evil apaid."¹⁹

"Well," quoth this January, "and hast thou said ?

Straw for thy Senec, and for thy provérbs,
 I countē not a pannier full of herbs
 Of schoolē termēs ; wiser men than thou,
 As thou hast heard, assented here right now
 To my purpose : Placebo, what say ye ?"
 "I say it is a cursed²⁰ man," quoth he,
 "That letteth²¹ matrimony, sickerly."
 And with that word they rise up suddenly,
 And be assented fully, that he should
 Be wedded when him list, and where he would.

High fantasy and curious business
 From day to day gan in the soul impress²²
 Of January about his marriáge.
 Many a fair shape, and many a fair viságe
 There passed through his heartē night by night.
 As whoso took a mirror poliah'd bright,
 And set it in a common market-place,
 Then should he see many a figure pace
 By his mirrór ; and in the samē wise
 Gan January in his thought devise
 Of maidens, which that dweltē him beside :
 He wistē not where that he might abide.²³
 For if that one had beauty in her face,
 Another stood so in the people's grace
 For her sadness²⁴ and her benignity,
 That of the people greatest voice had she :
 And some were rich and had a baddē name.
 But natheless, betwixt earnest and game,
 He at the last appointed him on one,
 And let all others from his heartē gon,
 And chose her of his own authority ;
 For love is blind all day, and may not see.
 And when that he was into bed y-brought,

¹ Depart, deviate.

² Advice, encouragement.

³ Judgment, sentiment.

⁴ In every point.

⁵ Advanced ; past participle of "step."

⁶ "y-stept in age" is used by Chaucer.

⁷ Consider.

⁸ Surely.

⁹ Known.

¹⁰ Satisfied.

¹¹ Elsewhere

¹² Given to drink.

¹³ Mad.

¹⁴ Describe, tell.

¹⁵ Company.

¹⁶ Ill-natured, wicked.

¹⁷ Imprint themselves.

¹⁸ Sedateness.

¹⁹ A scold.

²⁰ Sound in every point.

²¹ Qualities.

²² Especially.

²³ Displeased.

²⁴ Hindereth.

²⁵ Stay, fix his choice.

He pourtray'd in his heart and in his thought
 Her freshē beauty, and her agē tender,
 Her middle small, her armēs long and slender,
 Her wisē governance, her gentleness,
 Her womanly bearing, and her sadnēss.¹
 And when that he on her was condescended,²
 He thought his choicē might not be amended;
 For when that he himself concluded had,
 He thought each other mannē's wit so bad,
 That impossible it werē to reply
 Against his choice; this was his fantasy.
 His friendēs sent he to, at his instānce,
 And prayed them to do him that pleasānce,
 That hastily they would unto him come;
 He would abridge their labour all and some:
 Needed no more for them to go nor ride,³
 He was appointed where he would abide.⁴

Placebo came, and eke his friendēs soon,
 And alderfirst⁵ he bade them all a boon,⁶
 That none of them no arguments would make
 Against the purpose that he had y-take:
 Which purpose was pleasānt to God, said he,
 And very ground of his prosperity.
 He said, there was a maiden in the town,
 Which that of beauty haddē great renown;
 All⁷ were it so she were of small degree,
 Sufficed him her youth and her beauty;
 Which maid, he said, he would have to his wife,
 To lead in ease and holiness his life;
 And thanked God, that he might have her all,
 That no wight with his blissē partē⁸ shall;
 And prayed them to labour in this need,
 And shapē that he failē not to speed:
 For then, he said, his spirit was at ease.
 "Then is," quoth he, "nothing may me dis-
 please,

Save one thing pricketh in my conscience,
 The which I will rehearse in your presēce.
 I have," quoth he, "heard said, full yore⁹ ago,
 There may no man have perfect blisses two,
 This is to say, on earth and eke in heaven.
 For though he keep him from the sinnēs seven,
 And eke from every branch of thilkō tree,¹⁰
 Yet is there so perfect felicity,
 And so great ease and lust,¹¹ in marriage,
 That ev'r I am aghast,¹² now in mine age
 That I shall lead now so merry a life,
 So delicate, withoutē woe or strife,
 That I shall have mine heav'n on carthē here.
 For since that very heav'n is bought so dear,
 With tribulation and great penānce,
 How should I then, living in such pleasānce
 As allē wedded men do with their wivēs,
 Come to the bliss where Christ etern on
 live is?¹³

This is my dread;¹⁴ and ye, my brethren tway,
 Assoilē¹⁵ me this question, I you pray."

Justinus, which that hated his folly,
 Answer'd anon right in his japery;¹⁶

¹ Sedateness.

² Had selected her.

³ In quest of a wife for him, as they had promised.

⁴ He had definitively made his choice.

⁵ First of all.

⁶ Asked a favour, made a request.

⁷ Although.

⁸ Have a share.

⁹ Long.

¹⁰ That tree of original sin, of which the special sins are the branches.

¹¹ Comfort and pleasure.

¹² Alarmed, afraid.

¹³ Lives eternally.

And, for he would his longē tale abridge,
 He wouldē no authority¹⁷ allege,
 But saidē; "Sir, so there be none obstācle
 Other than this, God of his high mirācle,
 And of his mercy, may so for you wurch,¹⁸
 That, ere ye have your rights of holy church,
 Ye may repent of wedded mannē's life,
 In which ye say there is no woe nor strife:
 And ellēs God forbid, but if¹⁹ he sent
 A wedded man his grace him to repent
 Well often, rather than a single man.
 And therefore, Sir, the bestē rede I can,²⁰
 Despair you not, but have in your memory,
 Paraventure she may be your purgatory;
 She may be Goddē's means, and Goddē's whip;
 And then your soul shall up to heaven skip
 Swifter than doth an arrow from a bow.
 I hope to God hereafter ye shall know
 That there is none so great felicity
 In marriage, nor ever more shall be,
 That you shall let²¹ of your salvation;
 So that ye use, as skill is and reason,
 The lustēs²² of your wife attemperly,²³
 And that ye please her not too amorously,
 And that ye keep you eke from other sin.
 My tale is done, for my wit is but thin.
 Be not aghast²⁴ hereof, my brother dear,
 But let us waden out of this matter.
 The Wife of Bath, if ye have understand,
 Of marriage, which ye have now in hand,
 Declared hath full well in little space;
 Fare ye now well, God have you in his grace."

And with this word this Justin' and his brother
 Have ta'en their leave, and each of them of other.
 And when they saw that it must needēs be,
 They wroughtē so, by sleight and wise treaty,
 That she, this maiden, which that Maius hight,²⁴
 As hastily as ever that she might,
 Shall wedded be unto this Januāry.
 I trow it were too longē you to tarry,
 If I told you of every script and band²⁵
 By which she was feoffed in his land;
 Or for to reckon of her rich array.
 But finally y-comen is the day
 That to the churchē bothē be they went,
 For to receive the holy sacrament.
 Forth came the priest, with stole about his neck,
 And bade her be like Sarah and Rebecc'
 In wisdom and in truth of marriage;
 And said his orisons, as is usāge,
 And crouched²⁶ them, and bade²⁷ God should
 them bless,
 And made all sicker²⁸ enough with holiness.

Thus be they wedded with solemnity;
 And at the feastē sat both he and she,
 With other worthy folk, upon the dais.
 All full of joy and bliss is the palāce,
 And full of instruments, and of vitaille,
 The mostē dainteous²⁹ of all Itāle.

¹⁴ Doubt.

¹⁵ Mockery, jesting way.

¹⁶ Work.

¹⁷ This is the best counsel that I know.

¹⁸ Hinder.

¹⁹ Pleasures.

²⁰ Was named.

²¹ Crossed.

²² Secure.

²³ Resolve, answer.

²⁴ Written texts.

²⁵ Unless.

²⁶ Moderately.

²⁷ Writing and bond.

²⁸ Prayed that.

²⁹ Delicate.

Before them stood such instruments of soun',
That Orpheus, nor of Thebes Amphioûn,
Ne madë never such a melody.
At every course came in loud minstrelay,
That never Joab trumped for to hear,
Nor he, Theodomas, yet half so clear
At Thebes, when the city was in doubt.
Bacchus the wine them skinked¹ all about.
And Venus laughed upon every wight
(For January was become her knight,
And wouldë both assayë his couráge
In liberty, and eke in marriage),
And with her firebrand in her hand about
Danced before the bride and all the rout.
And certainly I dare right well say this,
Hyméneus, that god of wedding is,
Saw never his life so merry a wedded man.
Hold thou thy peace, thou poet Marcian,²
That writest us that ilkë³ wedding merry
Of her Philology and him Mercúry,
And of the songës that the Muses sung ;
Too small is both thy pen, and eke thy tongue,
For to describen of this marriage.
When tender youth hath wedded stooping age,
There is such mirth that it may not be writ ;
Assay it yourëself, then may ye wit⁴
If that I lie or no in this mattère.

Maïus, that sat with so benign a cheer,⁵
Her to behold it seemed faërie ;
Queen Esther never look'd with such an eye
On Assuere, so meek a look had she ;
I may you not devise all her beauty ;
But thus much of her beauty tell I may,
That she was like the bright morrow of May
Full filled of all beauty and pleasánce.
This January is ravish'd in a trance,
At every time he looked in her face ;
But in his heart he gan her to menace,
That he that night in armës would her strain
Harder than ever Paris did Heléne.
But natheless yet had he great pity
That thilkë night offendë her must he,
And thought, "Alas, O tender créature,
Now wouldë God ye mightë well endure
All my couráge, it is so sharp and keen ;
I am aghast⁶ ye shall it not sustene.
But God forbid that I did all my might.
Now wouldë God that it were waxen night,
And that the night would lasten evermo'.
I would that all this people were y-go."⁷
And finally he did all his labour,
As he best mightë, saving his honoûr,
To haste them from the meat in subtle wise.
The timë came that reason was to rise ;
And after that men dance, and drinkë fast,

¹ Poured out ; from Anglo-Saxon, "scencan."

² Marcianus Capella, who wrote a kind of philosophical romance, "De Nuptiis Mercurii et Philologie." "Her" and "him," two lines after, like "he" applied to Theodomas, are prefixed to the proper names for emphasis, according to the Anglo-Saxon usage.

³ That same, that.

⁴ Know.

⁵ Countenance.

⁶ Afraid.

⁷ Gone away.

⁸ Mad.

⁹ Fainted.

¹⁰ Bewail.

¹¹ Domestic ; belonging to the "familia," or household.

¹² Offers.

¹³ Domestic servant ; from Anglo-Saxon, "hiwa." Tyrwhitt reads "false of holy hue ;" but Mr

And spices all about the house they cast,
And full of joy and bliss is every man,
All but a squire, that hightë Damian,
Who carv'd before the knight full many a day ;
He was so ravish'd on his lady May,
That for the very pain he was nigh wood ;⁸
Almost he swelt⁹ and swooned where he stood,
So sore had Venus hurt him with her brand,
As that she bare it dancing in her hand.
And to his bed he went him hastily ;
No more of him as at this time speak I ;
But there I let him weep enough and plain,¹⁰
Till freshë May will rue upon his pain.
O perilous fire, that in the bedstraw breedeth !
O foe familiar,¹¹ that his service bedeth !¹²
O servant traitor, O false homely hewe,¹³
Like to the adder in bosom sly untrue,
God shield us allë from your acquaintánce !
O January, drunken in pleasánce
Of marriage, see how thy Damian,
Thine owen squiër and thy boren¹⁴ man,¹
Intendeth for to do thee villainy :¹⁵
God grantë thee thine homely foe¹⁶ t' espy.
For in this world is no worse pestilence
Than homely foe, all day in thy presénce.

Performed hath the sun his arc diurn,¹⁷
No longer may the body of him sojourn
On the horizon, in that latitude :
Night with his mantle, that is dark and rude,
Gan overspread the hemisphere about :
For which departed is this lusty rout¹⁸
From January, with thank on every side.
Home to their houses lustily they ride,
Where as they do their thingës as them lest,
And when they see their time they go to rest.
Soon after that this hasty¹⁹ Januáry
Will go to bed, he will no longer tarry.
He drankë hippocras, clarre,²⁰ and vernage²¹
Of spices hot, to increase his couráge ;
And many a lectuary had he full fine,
Such as the cursed monk Dan Constantine²²
Hath written in his book *de Coitu* ;
To eat them all he would nothing eschew :
And to his privy friendës thus said he :
"For Goddë's love, as soon as it may be,
Let voiden all this house in courteous wise."
And they have done right as he will devise.
Men drinken, and the travers²³ draw anon ;
The bride is brought to bed as still as stone ;
And when the bed was with the priest y-bless'd,
Out of the chamber every wight him dress'd,
And January hath fast in arms y-take
His freshë May, his paradise, his make.²⁴
He lulled her, he kissed her full oft ;
With thiekë bristles of his beard unsoft,

Wright has properly restored the reading adopted in the text.

¹⁴ Born ; owing to January faith and loyalty because born in his household.

¹⁵ Dishonour, outrage.

¹⁶ Enemy in the household.

¹⁷ Diurnal.

¹⁸ Pleasant company.

¹⁹ Eager.

²⁰ Spiced wine.

²¹ A wine believed to have come from Crete, although its name—Italian, "Vernaccia"—seems to be derived from Verona.

²² A medical author who wrote about 1080 ; his works were printed at Basle in 1536.

²³ Curtains.

²⁴ Mate, consort.

Like to the skin of houndfish,¹ sharp as brere²
 (For he was shav'n all new in his mannere),
 He rubbed her upon her tender face,
 And said thus; "Alas! I must trespace
 To you, my spouse, and you greatly offend,
 Ere timē come that I will down descend.
 But natheless consider this," quoth he,
 "There is no workman, whatsoe'er he be,
 That may both workē well and hastily:
 This will be done at leisure perfectly.
 It is no force³ how longē that we play;
 In truē wedlock coupled be we tway;
 And blessed be the yoke that we be in,
 For in our actēs may there be no sin.
 A man may do no sinnē with his wife,
 Nor hurt himselfē with his owen knife;
 For we have leave to play us by the law."

Thus labour'd he, till that the day gan daw,
 And then he took a sop in fine clarrē,
 And upright in his beddē then sat he.
 And after that he sang full loud and clear,
 And kiss'd his wife, and madē wanton cheer.
 He was all coltish, full of ragerie⁴
 And full of jargon as a flecked pie.
 The slackē skin about his neckē shaked,
 While that he sang, so chanted he and craked.⁵
 But God wot what that May thought in her
 heart,

When she him saw up sitting in his shirt
 In his night-cap, and with his neckē lean:
 She praised not his playing worth a bean.
 Then said he thus; "My restē will I take
 Now day is come, I may no longer wake;
 And down he laid his head and slept till prime.
 And afterward, when that he saw his time,
 Up rosē January, but freshē May
 Heldē her chamber till the fourthē day,
 As usage is of wivēs for the best.
 For every labour some time must have rest,
 Or ellēs longē may he not endure;
 This is to say, no life of creature,
 Be it of fish, or bird, or beast, or man.

Now will I speak of woeful Damian,
 That languisheth for love, as ye shall hear;
 Therefore I speak to him in this mannere.
 I say; "O silly Damian, alas!
 Answer to this demand, as in this case,
 How shalt thou to thy lady, freshē May,
 Tellē thy woe? She will alway say nay;
 Eke if thou speak, she will thy woe bewray;⁶
 God be thine help, I can no better say.
 This sickē Damian in Venus' fire
 So burned that he diēd for desire;
 For which he put his life in aventure,⁷
 No longer might he in this wise endure;
 But privily a penner⁸ gan he borrow,
 And in a letter wrote he all his sorrow,
 In manner of a cōplaint or a lay,

Unto his fairē freshē lady May.

And in a purse of silk, hung on his shirt,
 He hath it put, and laid it at his heart.

The moonē, that at noon was thilkē⁹ day
 That January had wedded freshē May,
 In ten of Taure, was into Cancer glided;¹⁰
 So long had Maius in her chamber abided,
 As custom is unto these nobles all.
 A bridē shall not eaten in the hall
 Till dayēs four, or three days at the least,
 Y-passed be; then let her go to feast.
 The fourthē day complete from noon to noon.
 When that the highē massē was y-done,
 In hallē sat this January, and May,
 As fresh as is the brightē summer's day.
 And so befell, how that this goodē man
 Remember'd him upon this Damian.
 And said; "Saint Mary, how may this be,
 That Damian attendeth not to me?
 Is he aye sick? or how may this betide?"
 His squiēra, which that stoodē there beside,
 Excused him, because of his sickness,
 Which letted¹¹ him to do his business:
 None other causē mightē make him tarry.
 "That me forthinketh,"¹² quoth this January;
 "He is a gentle squiēr, by my truth;
 If that he died, it were great harm and ruth.
 He is as wise, as discreet, and secrē,¹³
 As any man I know of his degree,
 And thereto manly and eke serviceable,
 And for to be a thrifty man right able.
 But after meat, as soon as ever I may
 I will myself visit him, and eke May,
 To do him all the comfort that I can."
 And for that word him blessed every man,
 That of his bounty and his gentleness
 He wouldē so comfōrten in sickness
 His squiēr, for it was a gentle deed.

"Dame," quoth this January, "take good
 heed,
 At after meat, ye with your women all
 (When that ye be in chamb'r out of this hall),
 That all ye go to see this Damian:
 Do him disport, he is a gentle man;
 And tellē him that I will him visite,
 Have I nothing but rested me a lite:¹⁴
 And speed you fastē, for I will abide
 Till that ye sleepē fastē by my side."
 And with that word he gan unto him call
 A squiēr, that was marshal of his hall,
 And told him certain thingēs that he wold.
 This freshē May hath straight her way y-hold,
 With all her women, unto Damian.
 Down by his beddē's sidē sat she than,¹⁵
 Comfōrting him as goodly as she may.
 This Damian, when that his time he say,¹⁶
 In secret wise his purse, and eke his bill,
 In which that he y-written had his will,

¹ Dogfish.

² No matter.

³ Quavered in his singing.

⁴ Discover, betray.

⁵ Writing-case, carried about by clerks or scholars.

⁶ That.

⁷ Risk.

⁸ Nearly all the manuscripts read "in two of Taure;" but Tyrwhitt has shown that, setting out from the second degree of Taurus, the moon, which in the four complete

⁹ Briar.

¹⁰ Wantonness.

days that Maius spent in her chamber could not have advanced more than fifty-three degrees, would only have been at the twenty-fifth degree of Gemini—whereas, by reading "ten," she is brought to the third degree of Cancer.

¹¹ Hindered.

¹² Grieves, causes uneasiness.

¹³ Secret, trusty.

¹⁴ When only I have rested me a little.

¹⁵ Then.

¹⁶ Saw.

Hath put into her hand withoutē more,
 Save that he sighed wondrous deep and sore,
 And softly to her right thus said he :
 " Mercy, and that ye not discover me :
 For I am dead if that this thing be kid."¹
 The pursē hath she in her bosom hid,
 And went her way ; ye get no more of me ;
 But unto January come is she,
 That on his beddē's sidē sat full soft.
 He took her, and he kissed her full oft,
 And laid him down to sleep, and that anon.
 She feigned her as that she mustē gon
 There as ye know that every wight must need ;
 And when she of this bill had taken heed,
 She rent it all to cloutēs² at the last,
 And in the privy softly it cast.
 Who studieth³ now but fairē freshē May ?
 Adown by oldē January she lay,
 That sleptē, till the cough had him awaked :
 Anon he pray'd her strippē her all naked,
 He would of her, he said, have some pleasānce ;
 And said her clothēs did him incumbrānce.
 And she obey'd him, be her lefe or loth.⁴
 But, lest that precious⁵ folk be with me wroth,
 How that he wrought I dare not to you tell,
 Or whether she thought it paradise or hell ;
 But there I let them worken in their wise
 Till even-song ring, and they must arise.

Were it by destiny, or aventure,
 Were it by influence, or by nature,
 Or constellation, that in such estate
 The heaven stood at that time fortunate
 As for to put a bill of Venus' works
 (For allē thing hath time, as say these clerks),
 To any woman for to get her love,
 I cannot say ; but greatē God above,
 That knoweth that none act is causēless,
 He deem⁶ of all, for I will hold my peace.
 But sooth is this, how that this freshē May
 Hath taken such impressiōn that day
 Of pity on this sickē Damian,
 That from her heartē she not drivē can
 The remembrāncē for to do him ease.⁷
 " Certain," thought she, " whom that this thing
 displease

I reekē not, for here I him assure,
 To love him best of any creature,
 Though he no morē haddē than his shirt."
 Lo, pity runneth soon in gentle heart.
 Here may ye see, how excellent franchise⁸
 In women is when they them narrow advise.⁹
 Some tyrant is,—as there be many a one,—
 That hath a heart as hard as any stone,
 Which would have let him sterven¹⁰ in the place
 Well rather than have granted him her grace ;
 And then rejoicen in her cruel pride.
 And reckon not to be a homicide.

¹ Or "kidde," past participle of "kythe" or "kithe," to show or discover.

² Fragments. ³ Is thoughtful.

⁴ Whether she were willing or reluctant.

⁵ Precise, over-nice ; French, "precieux," affected.

⁶ Let him judge. ⁷ To satisfy his desire.

⁸ Generosity. ⁹ Closely consider. ¹⁰ Die.

¹¹ Or "pruned ;" carefully trimmed and dressed himself. The word is used in falconry of a hawk when she picks and trims her feathers.

¹² A dog attending a hunter with the bow.

This gentle May, full filled of pity,
 Right of her hand a letter maked she,
 In which she granted him her very grace ;
 There lacked nought, but only day and place,
 Where that she might unto his lust suffice :
 For it shall be right as he will devise.
 And when she saw her time upon a day
 To visit this Damian went this May,
 And subtilly this letter down she thrust
 Under his pillow, read it if him lust.
 She took him by the hand, and hard him twist'
 So secretly, that no wight of it wist,
 And bade him be all whole ; and forth she went
 To January, when he for her sent.
 Up rosē Damian the nextē morrow,
 All passed was his sickness and his sorrow.
 He combed him, he proined¹¹ him and picked,
 He did all that unto his lady liked ;
 And eke to January he went as low
 As ever did a doggē for the bow.¹²
 He is so pleasant unto every man
 (For craft is all, whose that do it can),
 That every wight is fain to speak him good ;
 And fully in his lady's grace he stood.
 Thus leave I Damian about his need,
 And in my talē forth I will proceed.

Some clerkēs¹³ holdē that felicity
 Stands in delight ; and therefore certain he,
 This noble January, with all his might
 In honest wise as longeth to a knight,
 Shope¹⁴ him to livē full deliciously :
 His housing, his array, as honestly¹⁵
 To his degree was maked as a king's.
 Amongēs other of his honest things
 He had a garden walled all with stone ;
 So fair a garden wot I nowhere none.
 For out of doubt I verily suppose
 That he that wrote the Romance of the Rose¹⁶
 Could not of it the beauty well devise ;¹⁷
 Nor Priapus¹⁸ mightē not well suffice,
 Though he be god of gardens, for to tell
 The beauty of the garden, and the well¹⁹
 That stood under a laurel always green.
 Full often time he, Pluto, and his queen
 Proserpina, and all their faërie,
 Disported them and madē melody
 About that well, and danced, as men told.
 This noble knight, this January old,
 Such dainty²⁰ had in it to walk and play,
 That he would suffer no wight to bear the key,
 Save he himself, for of the small wickēt
 He bare always of silver a clikēt,²¹
 With which, when that him list, he it unshet.²²
 And when that he would pay his wifē's debt,
 In summer season, thither would he go,
 And May his wife, and no wight but they two ;
 And thingēs which that were not done in bed,

¹³ Writers, scholars.

¹⁴ Prepared, arranged.

¹⁵ Honourably, suitably.

¹⁶ Which opens with the description of a beautiful garden.

¹⁷ Tell, describe.

¹⁸ Son of Bacchus and Venus ; he was regarded as the promoter of fertility in all agricultural life, vegetable and animal ; while not only gardens, but fields, flocks, bees—and even fisheries—were supposed to be under his protection.

¹⁹ Fountain.

²⁰ Pleasure.

²¹ Key.

²² Unshut, opened.

He in the garden them perform'd and sped.
And in this wise many a merry day
Lived this January and fresh May,
But worldly joy may not always endure
To January, nor to no creature.

O sudden hap! O thou fortune unstable!
Like to the scorpion so deceivable,¹
That flatt'rest with thy head when thou wilt
sting;

Thy tail is death, through thine envenoming.
O brittle joy! O sweet poison quaint!²
O monster, that so subtilly canst paint
Thy giftes, under hue of steadfastness,
That thou deceivest both more and less!³
Why hast thou January thus deceiv'd,
That haddest him for thy full friend receiv'd?
And now thou hast bereft him both his eyen,
For sorrow of which desireth he to dien.

Alas! this noble January free,
Amid his lust⁴ and his prosperity
Is waxen blind, and that all suddenly.
He weeped and he wailed piteously;
And therewithal the fire of jealousy
(Lest that his wife should fall in some folly)
So burnt his heart, that he would fain,
That some man both him and her had slain;
For neither after his death, nor in his life,
Ne would he that she were no love nor wife,
But ever live as widow in cloth black,
Sole as the turtle that hath lost her make.⁵
But at the last, after a month or tway,
His sorrow gan assuage, sooth to say.
For, when he wist it might none other be,
He patiently took his adversity:
Save out of doubt he may not foregon
That he was jealous evermore-in-one:⁶
Which jealousy was so outrageous,
That neither in hall, nor in none other house,
Nor in none other place never the mo'
He would suffer her to ride or go,
But if⁷ that he had hand on her alway.
For which full often wept fresh May,
That loved Damian so burningly
That she must either dien suddenly,
Or ellis she must have him as her lest:⁸
She waited⁹ when her heart would brest.¹⁰

Upon that other side Damian
Becomen is the sorrowfullest man
That ever was; for neither night nor day
He might speak a word to fresh May,
As to his purpose, of no such matere,
But if⁷ that January must it hear,
That had a hand upon her evermo'.
But natheless, by writing to and fro,
And privy signes, wist he what she meant,
And she knew eke the fine¹¹ of his intent.

O January, what might it thee avail,
Though thou might see as far as shippes sail?
For as good is it blind deceiv'd to be,

¹ Deceitful.

² Both great and small.

³ Pleasure.

⁴ He could not cease to be jealous continually.

⁵ Unless.

⁶ Burst.

⁷ Deceived; by Mercury, see note 5, page 81.

⁸ Think confidently.

⁹ Strange.

¹⁰ Mate.

¹¹ Expected.

¹² End, aim.

As he deceived when a man may see.
Lo, Argus, which that had a hundred eyen,
For all that ever he could pore or pryen,
Yet was he blent;¹² and, God wot, so he mo',
That weenē wisely¹³ that it be not so:
Pass over is an ease, I say no more.
This fresh May, of which I spakē yore,
In warm wax hath imprinted the cliket¹⁴
That January bare of the small wicket
By which into his garden oft he went;
And Damian, that knew all her intent,
The cliket counterfeited privily;
There is no more to say, but hastily
Some wonder by this cliket shall betide,
Which ye shall hearken, if ye will abide.

O noble Ovid, sooth say'st thou, God wot,
What sleight is it, if love be long and hot,
That he'll not find it out in some mannere?
By Pyramus and Thisbe may men lear;¹⁵
Though they were kept full long and strait o'erall,
They be accorded,¹⁶ rowning¹⁷ through a wall,
Where no wight could have found out such a
sleight.

But now to purpose; ere that dayes eight
Were passed of the month of July, fill¹⁸
That January caught so great a will,
Through egging¹⁹ of his wife, him for to play
In his garden, and no wight but they tway,
That in a morning to this May said he:
"Rise up, my wife, my love, my lady free;
The turtle's voice is heard, mine owen sweet;
The winter is gone, with all his raines weet.²⁰
Come forth now with thine eyen columbine.²¹
Well fairer be thy breasts than any wine.
The garden is enclosed all about;
Come forth, my white spouse; for, out of doubt,
Thou hast me wounded in mine heart, O wife:
No spot in thee was e'er in all thy life.
Come forth, and let us taken our disport;
I choose thee for my wife and my comfort."
Such oldē lewēd wordes used he.

On Damian a signe madē she,
That he should go before with his cliket.
This Damian then hath opened the wicket,
And in he start, and that in such mannere
That no wight might him either see or hear;
And still he sat under a bush. Anon
This January, as blind as is a stone,
With Mains in his hand, and no wight mo',
Into this fresh garden is y-go,
And clapped to the wicket suddenly.
"Now, wife," quoth he, "here is but thou and I;
Thou art the creature that I best love:
For, by that Lord that sits in heav'n above,
Lever²² I had to dien on a knife,
Than thee offendē, dearē true wife.
For Goddē's sakē, think how I thee chee,²³
Not for no covetisē²⁴ doubtless,
But only for the love I had to thee.

¹⁴ Taken an impression of the key.

¹⁵ Learn.

¹⁶ They exchanged the assurances of their love; came to an agreement.

¹⁷ It befell, it happened.

¹⁸ Wet. See Song of Solomon, chap. ii.

¹⁹ Dove's eyes.

²⁰ Chose.

²¹ Whispering.

²² Inciting.

²³ Rather.

²⁴ Covetousness.

And though that I be old, and may not see,
Be to me true, and I will tell you why.
Certes three thinges shall ye win thereby:
First, love of Christ, and to yourself honoúr,
And all mine heritagē, town and tow'r.
I give it you, make charters as you lest;
This shall be done to-morrow ere sun rest,
So wisly¹ God my soulē bring to bliss!
I pray you, on this covenant me kiss.
And though that I be jealous, wite² me not;
Ye be so deep imprinted in my thought,
That when that I consider your beauty,
And therewithal th' unlikely³ eld of me,
I may not, certes, though I shouldē die,
Forbear to be out of your company,
For very love; this is withoutē doubt:
Now kiss me, wife, and let us roam about."

This freshē May, when she these wordēs
heard,

Benignly to January answer'd;
But first and forward she began to weep:
"I have," quoth she, "a soulē for to keep
As well as ye, and also mine honoúr,
And of my wifhood thilkē tender flow'r
Which that I have assured in your hond,
When that the priest to you my body bond:
Wherefore I will answer in this mannere,
With leave of you, mine owen lord so dear.
I pray to God, that never dawn the day
That I ne sterve,⁴ as foul as woman may,
If e'er I do unto my kin that shame,
Or ellēs I impairē so my name,
That I be false; and if I do that lack,
Do⁵ strippē me, and put me in a sack,
And in the nextē river do⁶ me drench:⁶
I am a gentle woman, and no wench.
Why speak ye thus? but men be e'er untrue,
And women have reproof of you aye new.
Ye know none other dalliance, I believe,
But speak to us of untrust and reprove."⁷
And with that word she saw where Damian
Sat in the bush, and coughē she began;
And with her finger signē madē she,
That Damian should climb upon a tree
That charged was with fruit; and up he went:
For verily he knew all her intent,
And every signē that she couldē make,
Better than January her own make.⁸
For in a letter she had told him all
Of this mattēr, how that he workē shall.
And thus I leave him sitting in the perry,⁹
And January and May roaming full merry.

Bright was the day, and blue the firmament;
Phœbus of gold his streamēs down had sent
To gladden every flow'r with his warmnēss;
He was that time in *Geminis*, I guess,
But little from his declinatiōn
Of Cancer, Jovē's exaltatiōn.
And so befell, in that bright morning-tide,

¹ Surely. ² Blame. ³ Dissimilar, incompatible.
⁴ Die not. ⁵ Cause. ⁶ Drown.
⁷ Reproof. ⁸ Mate. ⁹ Pear-tree.

¹⁰ "That fair field
Of Enna, where Proserpine, gath'ring flowers,
Herself a fairer flow'r, by gloomy Dis
Was gather'd."

—MILTON, "Paradise Lost," iv. 268.

That in the garden, on the farther side,
Pluto, that is the king of Faërie,
And many a lady in his company
Following his wife, the queen Proserpina,—
Which that he ravished out of Ethna,¹⁰
While that she gather'd flowers in the mead
(In Claudian ye may the story read,
How in his grisly chariot he her fet¹¹),—
This king of Faërie adown him set
Upon a bank of turfēs fresh and green,
And right anon thus said he to his queen.
"My wife," quoth he, "there may no wight
say nay,¹²—

Experience so proves it every day,—
The treason which that woman doth to man.
Ten hundred thousand stories tell I can
Notāble of your untruth and brittleness.¹³
O Solomon, richest of all richēs,
Full fill'd of sapience and worldly glory,
Full worthy be thy wordēs of memōry
To every wight that wit and reason can.¹⁴
Thus praised he yet the bountē¹⁵ of man:
'Among a thousand men yet found I one,
But of all women found I never none.'¹⁶
Thus said this king, that knew your wicked-

ness;
And Jesus, *Filius* Sirach,¹⁷ as I guess,
He spake of you but seldom reverence.
A wildē fire and cōrrupt pestilence
So fall upon your bodies yet to-night!
Ne see ye not this honourable knight?
Because, alas! that he is blind and old,
His owen man shall makē him cuckōld.
Lo, where he sits, the lechour, in the tree.
Now will I granten, of my majesty,
Unto this oldē blindē worthy knight,
That he shall have again his eyen sight,
When that his wife will do him villainy;
Then shall he knowen all her harlotry,
Both in reproof of her and other mo'."
"Yea, Sir," quoth Proserpine, "and will ye so?
Now by my mother Ceres' soul I swear
That I shall give her suffisant answer,
And allē women after, for her sake;
That though they be in any guilt y-take,
With facē bold they shall themselves excuse,
And bear them down that wouldē them accuse.
For lack of answer, none of them shall dien.
All¹⁸ had ye seen a thing with both your eyen,
Yet shall we visage it¹⁹ so hardily,
And weep, and swear, and chidē subtilly,
That ye shall be as lewēd²⁰ as be geese.
What recketh me of your authorities?
I wot well that this Jew, this Solomon,
Found of us women foolēs many one:
But though that he foundē no good womān,
Yet there hath found many another inan
Women full good, and true, and virtuoús;
Witness on them that dwelt in Christē's house;

¹¹ Fetched. ¹² Deny. ¹³ Inconstancy. ¹⁴ Knows.
¹⁵ Goodness. ¹⁶ See Ecclesiastes vii. 28.

¹⁷ Jesus, the son of Sirach, to whom is ascribed one of
the books of the Apocrypha—that called the "Wisdom
of Jesus the Son of Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus;" in which,
especially in the ninth and twenty-fifth chapters, severe
cautions are given against women.

¹⁸ Although. ¹⁹ Confront it, face it out. ²⁰ Ignorant, confounded.

With martyrdom they proved their constance.
The Roman gestes¹ makē remembrance
Of many a very true wife also.
But, Sir, be not wroth, albeit so,
Though that he said he found no good woman,
I pray you take the sentence² of the man :
He meant thus, that in sovereign bounté³
Is none but God, no, neither he nor she.⁴
Hey, for the very God that is but one,
Why makē ye so much of Solomon?
What though he made a temple, Goddē's house?
What though he werē rich and glorious?
So made he eke a temple of false goddēs ;
How might he do a thing that more forbode⁵
is ?

Pardie, as fair as ye his name emplaster,⁶
He was a lechour, and an idolaster,⁷
And in his eld he very⁸ God forsook.
And if that God had not (as saith the book)
Spared him for his father's sake, he should
Have lost his regnē⁹ rather¹⁰ than he would.
I settē not, of¹¹ all the villainy
That he of women wrote, a butterfly.
I am a woman, needēs must I speak,
Or ellēs swell until mine heartē break.
For since he said that we be jangleresses,¹²
As ever may I brookē¹³ whole my tresses,
I shall not sparē for no courtesy
To speak him harm, that said us villainy."
"Dame," quoth this Pluto, "be no longer
wroth ;

I give it up : but, since I swore mine oath
That I would grant to him his sight again,
My word shall stand, that warn I you certain :
I am a king, it sits¹⁴ me not to lie."

"And I," quoth she, "am queen of Faërie.
Her answer she shall have, I undertake,
Let us no morē wordēs of it make.
Forsooth, I will no longer you contrary."

Now let us turn again to January,
That in the garden with his fairē May
Singeth well merrier than the popinjay :¹⁵
"You love I best, and shall, and other none."
So long about the alleys is he gone,
Till he was comē to that ilkē perry,¹⁶
Where as this Damian sattē full merry
On high, among the freshē leavēs green.
This freshē May, that is so bright and sheen,
Gan for to sigh, and said, "Alas my side !
Now, Sir," quoth she, "for aught that may
betide,

I must have of the pearēs that I see,
Or I must die, so sorē longeth me
To eaten of the smallē pearēs green ;
Help, for her love that is of heaven queen !
I tell you well, a woman in my plight
May have to fruit so great an appetite,

¹ Histories ; such as those of Lucretia, Porcia, &c.

² Opinion, real meaning.

³ Perfect goodness.

⁴ Man nor woman.

⁵ Forbidden.

⁶ Plaster over, "whitewash."

⁷ Idolater.

⁸ The true. - ⁹ Kingdom.

¹⁰ Sooner.

¹¹ Care not for, value not.

¹² Praters.

¹³ Enjoy the use of, preserve.

¹⁴ Becomes, befits.

¹⁵ Parrot.

¹⁶ That same pear-tree.

¹⁷ Unless.

¹⁸ Servant.

¹⁹ No matter.

²⁰ Twig, bough.

²¹ Mince matters.

²² At this point, and again some twenty lines below,

That she may dien, but¹⁷ she of it have."

"Alas!" quoth he, "that I had here a knave¹⁸
That couldē climb ; alas ! alas !" quoth he,
"For I am blind." "Yea, Sir, no force,"¹⁹
quoth she ;

"But would ye vouchēsafe, for Goddē's sake,
The perry in your armēs for to take
(For well I wot that ye mistrustē me),
Then would I climbē well enough," quoth she,
"So I my foot might set upon your back."
"Certes," said he, "therein shall be no lack,
Might I you helpē with mine heartē's blood."

He stooped down, and on his back she stood,
And caught her by a twist,²⁰ and up she go'th.
(Ladies, I pray you that ye be not wroth,
I cannot glose,²¹ I am a rudē man) :

And suddenly anon this Damian
Gan pullen up the smock, and in he throng.²²
And when that Pluto saw this greatē wrong,
To January he gave again his sight,
And made him see as well as ever he might.
And when he thus had caught his sight again,
Was never man of anything so fain :

But on his wife his thought was evermo'.
Up to the tree he cast his eyen two,
And saw how Damian his wife had dress'd,
In such mannere, it may not be express'd,
But if²³ I wouldē speak uncourteously.
And up he gave a roaring and a cry,
As doth the mother when the child shall die ;
"Out ! help ! alas ! harow !" he gan to cry ;
"O strongē, lady, stowre!²⁴ what doest thou ?"

And she answered : "Sir, what aileth you ?
Have patience and reason in your mind,
I have you help'd on both your eyen blind.
On peril of my soul, I shall not lien,
As me was taught to helpē with your eyen,
Was nothing better for to make you see,
Than struggle with a man upon a tree :
God wot, I did it in full good intent."
"Struggle !" quoth he, "yea, algate in it
went.

God give you both one shamē's death to dien !
He swived thee ; I saw it with mine eyen ;
And ellēs be I hanged by the halse."²⁵
"Then is," quoth she, "my medicine all false ;
For certainly, if that ye mightē see,
Ye would not say these wordēs unto me.
Ye have some glimpaing,²⁶ and no perfect sight."
"I see," quoth he, "as well as ever I might,
(Thanked be God !) with both mine eyen two,
And by my faith me thought he did thee so."
"Ye maze, ye mazē,²⁷ goodē Sir," quoth she ;
"This thank have I for I have made you see :
Alas !" quoth she, "that e'er I was so kind."
"Now, Dame," quoth he, "let all pass out of
mind ;

several verses of a very coarse character had been inserted in later manuscripts ; but they are evidently spurious, and are omitted in the best editions.

²³ Unless.

²⁴ "Store" is the general reading here, but its meaning is not obvious. "Stowre" is found in several manuscripts ; it signifies "struggle" or "resist ;" and both for its own appropriateness, and for the force which it gives the word "stronge," the reading in the text seems the better.

²⁵ Neck.

²⁶ Glimmering.

²⁷ Rave, are confused.

Come down, my lefe,¹ and if I have missaid,
God help me so, as I am evil apaid.²
But, by my father's soul, I ween'd have seen
How that this Damian had by thee lain,
And that thy smock had lain upon his breast."

"Yea, Sir," quoth she, "ye may ween as you
lest :³

But, Sir, a man that wakes out of his sleep,
He may not suddenly well takē keep⁴
Upon a thing, nor see it perfectly,
Till that he be adawed⁵ verily.
Right so a man, that long hath blind y-be,
He may not suddenly so well y-see,
First when his sight is newē come again,
As he that hath a day or two y-seen.
Till that your sight establish'd be a while,
There may full many a sightē you beguile.
Beware, I pray you, for, by heaven's king,
Full many a man weeneth to see a thing,
And it is all another than it seemeth ;
He which that misconceiveth oft misdeemeth."⁶
And with that word she leapt down from the
tree.

This January, who is glad but he?
He kissed her, and clipped⁷ her full oft,
And on her womb he stroked her full soft ;
And to his palace home he hath her lad.⁸

Now, goodē men, I pray you to be glad.
Thus endeth here my tale of Januāry,
God bless us, and his mother, Saintē Mary.

THE SQUIRE'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.

"HEY! Goddē's mercy!" said our Hostē tho,⁹
"Now such a wife I pray God keep me fro'.
Lo, suchē aleightēs and subtilities
In women be; for aye as busy as bees
Are they us silly men for to deceive,
And from the soothē¹⁰ will they ever weive,¹¹
As this Merchantē's tale it proveth well.
But natheless, as true as any steel,
I have a wife, though that she poorē be;
But of her tongue a labbing¹² shrew is she;
And yet¹³ she hath a heap of vices mo'.
Thereof no force;¹⁴ let all such thingēs go.
But wit¹⁵ ye what? in counsel¹⁶ be it said,
Me rueth sore I am unto her tied;

¹ Dear.

² Think as you please.

³ Awakened.

⁴ Embraced.

⁵ Then.

⁶ Blabbing, prating.

⁷ No matter.

⁸ Secret, confidence.

⁹ Certainly.

¹⁰ Are adepts at giving circulation to such wares. The Host evidently means that his wife would be sure to hear of his confessions from some female member of the company.

¹¹ Know of it.

¹² The Squire's Tale has not been found under any other form among the literary remains of the Middle Ages; and it is unknown from what original it was derived, if from any. The Tale is unfinished, not because

² Grieved.

⁴ Notice.

⁵ Who mistakes oft misjudges.

⁸ Led.

¹¹ Swerve, depart.

¹² Moreover.

¹⁵ Know.

¹⁷ If.

¹⁹ Foolish.

²¹ Done.

²² Pleasure.

For, an'¹⁷ I shouldē reckon every vice
Which that she hath, y-wis¹⁸ I were too nice;¹⁹
And causē why, it should reported be
And told her by some of this company
(By whom, it needeth not for to declare,
Since women connen utter such chaffāre²⁰),
And eke my wit sufficeth not thereto
To tellen all; wherefore my tale is do.²¹
Squiēr, come near, if it your willē be,
And say somewhat of love, for certes ye
Connē thereon²² as much as any man."
"Nay, Sir," quoth he; "but such thing as I can,
With hearty will,—for I will not rebel
Against your lust,²³—a talē will I tell.
Have me excused if I speak amiss;
My will is good; and lo, my tale is this."

THE TALE.²⁴

Pars Prima.

At Sarra, in the land of Tartary,
There dwelt a king that warrayed²⁵ Russie,
Through which there died many a doughty
man;
This noble king was called Cambuscan,²⁶
Which in his time was of so great renown,
That there was nowhere in no regioun
So excellent a lord in allē thing:
Him lacked nought that longeth to a king,
As of the sect of which that he was born.
He kept his law to which he was y-sworn,
And thereto²⁷ he was hardy, wise, and rich,
And piteous and just, always y-lich;²⁸
True of his word, benign and honourāble;
Of his corāge as any centre stable;²⁹
Young, fresh, and strong, in armēs desiroūs
As any bachelor of all his house.
A fair persōn he was, and fortunate,
And kept alway so well his royal estate,
That there was nowhere such another man.
This noble king, this Tartar Cambuscan,
Haddē two sons by Elfeta his wife,
Of which the eldest hightē Algarnife,
The other was y-called Camballō.
A daughter had this worthy king also,
That youngest was, and hightē Canacé:
But for to tellē you all her beauty,
It lies not in my tongue, nor my conning;³⁰
I dare not undertake so high a thing:
Mine English eke is insufficient,
It mustē be a rhetor³¹ excellent,

the conclusion has been lost, but because the author left it so.

²⁵ Made war upon; the Russians and Tartars waged constant hostilities between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries.

²⁶ In the best manuscripts the name is "Cambynskan," and thus, no doubt, it should strictly be read. But it is a most pardonable offence against literal accuracy to use the word which Milton has made classical, in "Il Penseroso," speaking of "him that left half-told the story of Cambuscan bold." Surely the admiration of Milton might well seem to the spirit of Chaucer to condone a much greater transgression on his domain than this verbal change—which to both eye and ear is an unquestionable improvement on the uncouth original.

²⁷ Moreover, besides.

²⁸ Alike, in even mood.

²⁹ Firm, immovable of spirit. ³⁰ Skill. ³¹ Orator.

That couth his colours longing for that art,¹
If he should her describen any part ;
I am none such, I must speak as I can.

And so befell, that when this Cambuscan
Had twenty winters borne his diadem,
As he was wont from year to year, I deem,
He let the feast of his nativity
Do cryë,² throughout Sarra his city,
The last Idus of March, after the year.
Phœbus the sun full jolly was and clear,
For he was nigh his exaltation
In Martë's face, and in his mansion³
In Aries, the cholerie hot sign :
Full lusty⁴ was the weather and benign ;
For which the fowls against the sunnë sheen,⁵
What for the season and the youngë green,
Full loudë sangë their affectionis :
Them seemed to have got protectionis
Against the sword of winter keen and cold.
This Cambuscan, of which I have you told,
In royal vesture, sat upon his dais,
With diadem, full high in his palace ;
And held his feast so solemn and so rich,
That in this worldë was there none it lich.⁶
Of which if I should tell all the array,
Then would it occupy a summer's day ;
And eke it needeth not for to devise⁷
At every course the order of service.
I will not tellen of their strangë sewes,⁸
Nor of their swannës, nor their heronsews.⁹
Eke in that land, as tellë knightës old,
There is some meat that is full dainty hold,
That in this land men reck of¹⁰ it full small :
There is no man that may reporten all.
I will not tarry you, for it is prime,
And for it is no fruit, but loss of time ;
Unto my purpose¹¹ I will have recourse.
And so befell that, after the third course,
While that this king sat thus in his nobley,¹²
Hearing his minstrelës their thingës play
Before him at his board deliciously,
In at the hallë door all suddenly
There came a knight upon a steed of brass,
And in his hand a broad mirrör of glass ;
Upon his thumb he had of gold a ring,
And by his side a naked sword hanging :
And up he rode unto the highë board.
In all the hall was there not spoke a word,
For marvel of this knight ; him to behold
Full busily they waited, ¹³ young and old.

This strangë knight, that came thus suddenly,
All armed, save his head, full richëly,
Saluted king, and queen, and lordës all,

¹ Well skilled in using the colours—the word-painting—belonging to his art.

² Caused his birthday festival to be proclaimed, ordered by proclamation.

³ Aries was the mansion of Mars—to whom "his" applies. Leo was the mansion of the Sun.

⁴ Pleasant. ⁵ Bright. ⁶ Like. ⁷ Relate.

⁸ Dishes, or soups. The precise force of the word is uncertain ; but it may be connected with "seethe," to boil ; and it seems to describe a dish in which the flesh was served up amid a kind of broth or gravy. The "sewer," taster or assayer of the viands served at great tables, probably derived his name from the verb to "say" or "assay ;" though Tyrwhitt would connect the two words, by taking both from the French, "asseoir," to place—making the arrangement of the table the leading duty of the "sewer," rather than the testing of the food.

By order as they satten in the hall,
With so high reverence and óbservance,
As well in speech as in his countenance,
That Gawain¹⁴ with his oldë courtesy,
Though he were come again out of Faerie,
Him couldë not amendë with a word.¹⁵
And after this, before the highë board,
He with a manly voice said his messáge,
After the form used in his language,
Withoutë vice¹⁶ of syllable or letter.
And, for his talë shouldë seem the better,
Accordant to his wordës was his cheer,¹⁷
As teacheth art of speech them that it lear.¹⁸
Albeit that I cannot sound his style,
Nor cannot climb over so high a stile,
Yet say I this, as to commúne intent,¹⁹
Thus much amounteth²⁰ all that ever he meant,
If it so be that I have it in mind.

He said ; " The king of Araby and Ind,
My liegë lord, on this solemnë day
Saluteth you as he best can and may,
And sendeth you, in honour of your feast,
By me, that am all ready at your hest,²¹
This steed of brass, that easily and well
Can in the space of one day naturel
(This is to say, in four-and-twenty hours),
Whereso you list, in drought or else in show'rs,
Bearë your body into every place
To which your heartë willeth for to pace,²²
Withoutë wem²³ of you, through foul or fair.
Or if you list to fly as high in air
As doth an eagle, when him list to soar,
This samë steed shall bear you evermore
Withoutë harm, till ye be where you lest²⁴
(Though that ye sleepen on his back, or rest),
And turn again, with writhing²⁵ of a pin.
He that it wrought, he couldë²⁶ many a gin ;²⁷
He waited²⁸ many a constellatiön,
Ere he had done this operatiön,
And knew full many a seal²⁹ and many a bond.
This mirror eke, that I have in mine hond,
Hath such a might, that men may in it see
When there shall fall any adversity
Unto your realm, or to yourself also,
And openly who is your friend or foe.
And over all this, if any lady bright
Hath set her heart on any manner wight,
If he be false, she shall his treason see,
His newë love, and all his subtlety,
So openly that there shall nothing hide.
Wherefore, against this lusty summer-tide,
This mirror, and this ring that ye may see,
He hath sent to my lady Canacé,

⁹ Young herons ; French, "heronneaux."

¹⁰ Care for. ¹¹ Story, discourse ; French, "propos."

¹² Noble, brave array. ¹³ Watched.

¹⁴ Celebrated in mediæval romance as the most courteous among King Arthur's knights.

¹⁵ Could not better him by one word.

¹⁶ Fault. ¹⁷ Demeanour. ¹⁸ Learn.

¹⁹ The general sense or meaning.

²⁰ This is the sum of. ²¹ Command.

²² Pass, go. ²³ Hurt, injury.

²⁴ It pleases you. ²⁵ Twisting. ²⁶ Knew.

²⁷ Contrivance ; trick ; snare. Compare Italian, "inganno," deception ; and our own "engine."

²⁸ Observed.

²⁹ Mr Wright remarks that "the making and arrangement of seals was one of the important operations of mediæval magic."

Your excellentē daughter that is here.
 The virtue of this ring, if ye will hear,
 Is this, that if her list it for to wear
 Upon her thumb, or in her purse it bear,
 There is no fowl that flyeth under heaven,
 That she shall not well understand his steven,¹
 And know his meaning openly and plain,
 And answer him in his language again :
 And every grass that groweth upon root
 She shall eke know, to whom it will do boot,²
 All be his woundēs ne'er so deep and wide.
 This naked sword, that hangeth by my side,
 Such virtue hath, that what man that it smite,
 Throughout his armour it will carve and bite,
 Were it as thick as is a branched oak :
 And what man is y-wounded with the stroke
 Shall ne'er be whole, till that you list, of grace,
 To stroke him with the flat in thilkē³ place
 Where he is hurt ; this is as much to sayn,
 Ye mustē with the flattē sword again
 Stroke him upon the wound, and it will close.
 This is the very sooth, withoutē glose ;⁴
 It faileth not, while it is in your hold."

And when this knight had thus his talē told,
 He rode out of the hall, and down he light.
 His steedē, which that shone as sunnē bright,
 Stood in the court as still as any stone.
 The knight is to his chamber led anon,
 And is unarmed, and to meat y-set.⁵
 These presents be full richēly y-fet,⁶—
 This is to say, the sword and the mirroúr,—
 And borne anon into the highē tow'r,
 With certain officers ordain'd therefor ;
 And unto Canacō the ring is bore
 Solemnly, where she sat at the table ;
 But sickerly, withouten any fable,
 The horse of brass, that may not be remued.⁷
 It stood as it were to the ground y-glued ;
 There may no man out of the place it drive
 For no engine of windlass or polive ;⁸
 And causē why, for they can not the craft ;⁹
 And therefore in the place they have it left,
 Till that the knight hath taught them the
 mannere

To voidē¹⁰ him, as ye shall after hear.

Great was the press, that swarmed to and fro
 To gauren¹¹ on this horse that stoodē so :
 For it so high was, and so broad and long,
 So well proportioned for to be strong,
 Right as it were a steed of Lombardy ;
 Therewith so horsely, and so quick of eye,
 As it a gentle Poileis¹² courser were :
 For certes, from his tail unto his ear

Nature nor art ne could him not amend
 In no degree, as all the people wend.¹³
 But evermore their mostē wonder was
 How that it couldē go, and was of brass ;
 It was of Faerie, as the people seem'd.
 Diversē folk diversely they deem'd ;
 As many heads, as many wittēs been.
 They murmured, as doth a swarm of been,¹⁴
 And madē skills¹⁵ after their fantasies,
 Rehearsing of the oldē poetries,
 And said that it was like the Pegasē,¹⁶
 The horse that haddē wingēs for to flee ;
 Or else it was the Greekē's horse Sinon,¹⁷
 That broughtē Troyē to destruction,
 As men may in the oldē gestēs¹⁸ read.
 "Mine heart," quoth one, "is evermore in dread ;
 I trow some mon of armēs be therein,
 That shapē them¹⁹ this city for to win :
 It were right good that all such thing were
 know."

Another rownd²⁰ to his fellow low,
 And said, "He lies ; for it is rather like
 An apparēcē made by some magic,
 As jugglers playen at these feastēs great."
 Of sundry doubts they jangle thus and treat.
 As lewēd²¹ people deemē commonly
 Of thingēs that be made more subtilly
 Than they can in their lew'dness comprehend ;
 They deemē gladly to the badder end.²²

And some of them wonder'd on the mirroúr,
 That borne was up into the master tow'r,²³
 How men might in it suchē thingēs see.
 Another answer'd and said, it might well be
 Naturally by compositionē
 Of angles, and of sly reflectionē ;
 And saidē that in Rome was such a one.
 They speak of Alhazen and Vitellon,²⁴
 And Aristotle, that wrote in their lives
 Of quaintē²⁵ mirrors, and of próspectives,
 As knowē they that have their bookēs heard.
 And other folk have wonder'd on the sword,
 That wouldē piercē throughout every thing ;
 And fell in speech of Telephus the king,
 And of Achilles for his quaintē spear,
 For he could with it bothē heal and dere,²⁶
 Right in such wise as men may with the sword
 Of which right now ye have yourselvēs heard.
 They spake of sundry hard'ning of metál,
 And spake of medicinēs therewithal,
 And how, and when, it shouldē harden'd be,
 Which is unknowen algate²⁷ unto me.
 Then spakē they of Canacē's ring,
 And saiden all, that such a wondrous thing

¹ Speech, sound. ² Remedy. ³ The same.

⁴ Deceit. ⁵ Seated at table. ⁶ Fetched.

⁷ Removed ; French, "remuer," to stir.

⁸ Pulley.

⁹ Know not the cunning of the mechanism.

¹⁰ Remove.

¹¹ Gaze.

¹² Apulian. The horses of Apulia—in old French "Poille," in Italian "Puglia"—were held in high value.

¹³ Weened, thought.

¹⁴ Bees.

¹⁵ Reasons.

¹⁶ Pegasus.

¹⁷ The wooden horse of the Greek Sinon, introduced into Troy by the stratagem of its maker.

¹⁸ Narratives of exploits and adventures.

¹⁹ Design, prepare.

²⁰ Whispered.

²¹ Ignorant.

²² Are ready to think the worst.

²³ Chief tower ; as, in the Knight's Tale, the principal

street is called the "master street." See note 6, page 45.

²⁴ Two writers on optics, the first supposed to have lived about 1100, the other about 1270. Tyrwhitt says that their works were printed at Basle in 1572, under the title "Alhazeni et Vitellonis Opticæ."

²⁵ Curious.

²⁶ Wound. Telephus, a son of Hercules, reigned over Mysia when the Greeks came to besiege Troy, and he sought to prevent their landing. But, by the art of Dionysus, he was made to stumble over a vine, and Achilles wounded him with his spear. The oracle informed Telephus that the hurt could be healed only by him, or by the weapon, that inflicted it ; and the king, seeking the Grecian camp, was healed by Achilles with the rust of the charmed spear.

²⁷ However.

Of craft of ringes heard they never none,
Save that he, Moses, and King Solomon,
Hadden a name of conning¹ in such art.
Thus said the people, and drew them apart.
But natheless some saidē that it was
Wonder to maken of fern ashes glass,
And yet is glass nought like ashes of fern;
But, for² they have y-knowen it so ferne,³
Therefore ceaseth their jangling and their wonder.
As sorē wonder some on cause of thunder,
On ebb and flood, on gossamer and mist,
And on all thing, till that the cause is wist.⁴
Thus jangle they, and deemen and devise,
Till that the king gan from his board arise.

Rhebus had left the angle meridional,
And yet ascending was the beast royal,
The gentle Lion, with his Aldrian,⁵
When that this Tartar king, this Cambuscan,
Rose from his board, there as he sat full high:
Before him went the loudē minstrelsy,
Till he came to his chamber of parēments,⁶
There as they sounded divers instruments,
That it was like a heaven for to hear.
Now danced lusty Venus' children dear:
For in the Fish⁷ their lady sat full high,
And looked on them with a friendly eye.
This noble king is set upon his throne;
This strangē knight is fetched to him full sone,⁸
And on the dance he goes with Canacé.
Here is the revel and the jollity,
That is not able a dull man to devise:⁹
He must have knowen love and his service,
And been a feastly¹⁰ man, as fresh as May,
That shouldē you devisē such array.
Who couldē tellē you the form of dances
So uncouth,¹¹ and so freshē countenances,¹²
Such subtle lookings and dissimulings
For dread of jealous men's apperceivings?
No man but Launcelot,¹³ and he is dead.
Therefore I pass o'er all this lustihead;¹⁴
I say no more, but in this jolliness
I leave them, till to supper men them dress.
The steward bids the spices for to hie¹⁵
And eke the wine, in all this melody;
The ushers and the squiērs be y-gone,
The spices and the wine is come anon:
They eat and drink, and when this hath an end,
Unto the temple, as reason was, they wend;
The service done, they suppen all by day.
What needeth you rehearse their array?
Each man wot well, that at a king's feast
Is plenty, to the most¹⁶ and to the least,
And dainties more than be in my knowing.

At after supper went this noble king

¹ Had a reputation for knowledge.

² Because.

³ Before; a corruption of "forne," from Anglo-Saxon, "foran."

⁴ Known.

⁵ Or Alderan; a star in the neck of the constellation Leo.

⁶ Presence-chamber, or chamber of state, full of splendid furniture and ornaments. The same expression is used in French and Italian.

⁷ In Pisces, Venus was said to be at her exaltation or greatest power. See note 28, page 77.

⁸ Soon.

⁹ Tell, describe.

¹⁰ Merry, gay.

¹¹ Unfamiliar, strange; from "conne," to know. See note 7, page 17.

¹² The pantomimic gestures of the dance.

To see the horse of brass, with all a rout
Of lordēs and of ladies him about.
Such wond'ring was there on this horse of brass,
That, since the greatē siege of Troyē was,
There as men wonder'd on a horse also,
Ne'er was there such a wond'ring as was tho.¹⁷
But finally the king asked the knight
The virtue of this courser, and the might,
And prayed him to tell his governance.¹⁸
The horse anon began to trip and dance,
When that the knight laid hand upon his rein,
And saidē, "Sir, there is no more to sayn,
But when you list to riden anywhere,
Ye mustē trill¹⁹ a pin, stands in his ear,
Which I shall tellē you betwixt us two;
Ye mustē name him to what place also,
Or to what country that you list to ride.
And when ye comē where you list abide,
Bid him descend, and trill another pin
(For therein lies th' effect of all the gin²⁰),
And he will down descend and do your will,
And in that place he will abidē still;
Though all the world had the contrāry swore,
He shall not thence be throwen nor be bore.
Or, if you list to bid him thennēs gon,
Trill this pin, and he will vanish anon
Out of the sight of every manner wight,
And come again, be it by day or night,
When that you list to clepē²¹ him again
In such a guise, as I shall to you sayn
Betwixtē you and me, and that full soon.
Ride²² when you list, there is no more to do'n."

Informed when the king was of the knight,
And had conceived in his wit aright
The manner and the form of all this thing,
Full glad and blithe, this noble doughty king
Repaired to his revel as beforē.
The bridle is into the tower borne,
And kept among his jewels lefe²³ and dear;
The horse vanish'd, I n'ot²⁴ in what mannēre,
Out of their sight; ye get no more of me:
But thus I leave in lust and jollity
This Cambuscan his lordēs feasting,²⁵
Until well nigh the day began to spring.

Pars Secunda.

The norice²⁶ of digestion, the sleep,
Gan on them wink, and bade them takē keep,²⁷
That muchē mirth and labour will have rest:
And with a gaping²⁸ mouth them all he kest,²⁹
And said, that it was timē to lie down,
For blood was in his dominatioun:
"Oherish the blood,³⁰ natūre's friend," quoth he.

¹³ Arthur's famous knight, so accomplished and courtly, that he was held the very pink of chivalry.

¹⁴ Pleasantness.

¹⁵ Haste.

¹⁶ Greatest.

¹⁷ Then.

¹⁸ Mode of managing him.

¹⁹ Turn; akin to "thirl," "drill."

²⁰ Contrivance.

²¹ Call.

²² Another reading is "bide," alight or remain.

²³ Oherished.

²⁴ Know not.

²⁵ Entertaining; French, "festoyer," to feast.

²⁶ Nurse.

²⁷ Heed.

²⁸ Yawning.

²⁹ Kissed.

³⁰ The old physicians held that blood dominated in the human body late at night and in the early morning. Galen says that the domination lasts for seven hours.

They thanked him gaping, by two and three ;
 And every wight gan draw him to his rest,
 As sleep them bade, they took it for the best.
 Their dreamës shall not now be told for me ;
 Full were their headës of fumosity,¹
 That caused dreams of which there is no charge.²
 They sleptë till that it was primë large,³
 The mostë part, but⁴ it were Canacé ;
 She was full measuráble,⁵ as women be.
 For of her father had she ta'en her leave,
 To go to rest, soon after it was eve ;
 Her listë not appalled⁶ for to be,
 Nor on the morrow unfeastly for to see ;⁷
 And slept her firstë sleep, and then awoke.
 For such a joy she in her heartë took
 Both of her quaintë⁸ ring and her mirroúr,
 That twenty times she changed her colóur ;
 And in her sleep, right for th' impressiön
 Of her mirrór, she had a visiön.
 Wherefore, ere that the sunnë gan up glide,
 She call'd upon her mistress' ⁹ her beside,
 And saidë, that her listë for to rise.

These oldë women, that be gladly wise,
 As are her mistresses, answór'd anon,
 And said ; " Madamë, whither will ye gon
 Thus early ? for the folk be all in rest."
 " I will," quoth she, " arisë, for me lest
 No longer for to sleep, and walk about."
 Her mistresses call'd women a great rout,
 And up they rosë, well a ten or twelve ;
 Up rosë freshë Canacé herselfe,
 As ruddy and bright as is the youngë sun
 That in the Ram is four degrees y-run ;
 No higher was he, when she ready was ;
 And forth she walked easily a pace,
 Array'd after the lusty¹⁰ season swoot,¹¹
 Lightly for to play, and walk on foot,
 Nought but with five or six of her meinie ;¹²
 And in a trench¹³ forth in the park went she.
 The vapour, which up from the earthë glode,¹⁴
 Madë the sun to seem ruddy and broad :
 But, natheless, it was so fair a sight
 That it made all their heartës for to light,¹⁵
 What for the season, and the morrowning,
 And for the fowlës that she heardë sing.
 For right anon she wistë¹⁶ what they meant
 Right by their song, and knew all their intent.
 The knottë,¹⁷ why that every tale is told,
 If it be tarried¹⁸ till the lust¹⁹ be cold
 Of them that have it hearken'd after yore,²⁰
 The savour passeth ever longer more,
 For fulsomeness of the prolixity :
 And by that samë reason thinketh me
 I should unto the knottë condescend,
 And maken of her walking soon an end.

Amid a tree fordry,²¹ as white as chalk,

As Canacé was playing in her walk,
 There sat a falcon o'er her head full high,
 That with a piteous voice so gan to cry,
 That all the wood resounded of her cry,
 And beat she had herself so piteously
 With both her wingës, till the reddë blood
 Ran endëlong²² the tree, there as she stood.
 And ever-in-one²³ alway she cried and ahright,²⁴
 And with her beak herselfë she so pight,²⁵
 That there is no tiger, nor cruel beast,
 That dwelleth either in wood or in forëst,
 But would have wept, if that he weepë could,
 For sorrow of her, she shriek'd alway so loud.
 For there was never yet no man alive,
 If that he could a falcon well describe,²⁶
 That heard of such another of fairnéas
 As well of plumage, as of gentleness,
 Of shape, of all that mightë reckon'd be.
 A falcon peregrinë seemed she,
 Of fremdë²⁷ land ; and ever as she stood
 She swooned now and now for lack of blood,
 Till well-nigh is she fallen from the tree.

This fairë kingë's daughter Canacé,
 That on her finger bare the quaintë⁸ ring,
 Through which she understood well every thing
 That any fowl may in his leden²⁸ sayn,
 And could him answer in his leden again,
 Hath understoodë what this falcon said,
 And well-nigh for the ruth²⁹ almost she died ;
 And to the tree she went full hastily,
 And on this falcon looked piteously,
 And held her lap abroad, for well she wist
 The falcon mustë fallë from the twist³⁰
 When that she swooned next, for lack of blood.
 A longë while to waitë her she stood,
 Till at the last she spake in this mannëre
 Unto the hawk, as ye shall after hear.
 " What is the cause, if it be for to tell,
 That ye be in this furial³¹ pain of hell ?"
 Quoth Canacé unto this hawk above ;
 " Is this for sorrow of death, or loss of love ?
 For, as I trow,³² these be the causes two,
 That causë most a gentle heartë woe.
 Of other harm it needeth not to speak.
 For ye yourself upon yourself awreak,³³
 Which proveth well, that either ire or dread³⁴
 Must be occasion of your cruel deed,
 Since that I see none other wight you chase.
 For love of God, as do yourselfë grace,³⁵
 Or what may be your help ? for, west nor east,
 I never saw ere now no bird nor beast
 That fared with himself so piteously.
 Ye alay me with your sorrow verily,
 I have of you so great compassiön.
 For Goddë's love come from the tree adown ;
 And, as I am a kingë's daughter true,

¹ Fumes of wine rising from the stomach to the head.

² Which are of no significance.

³ Broad forenoon, dinner-time.

⁴ Except.

⁵ Moderate.

⁶ She did not choose to be made pale.

⁷ To look sad, depressed.

⁸ Curious.

⁹ Tutoresses, governesses.

¹⁰ Pleasant.

¹¹ Sweet.

¹² Servants, household.

¹³ A path cut out.

¹⁴ Glided.

¹⁵ Be lightened, gladdened.

¹⁶ Knew.

¹⁷ Nucleus, chief matter.

¹⁸ Delayed.

¹⁹ Inclination, zest.

²⁰ For a long time.

²¹ Thoroughly dried up.

²² From top to bottom of.

²³ Incessantly.

²⁴ Shrieked.

²⁵ Picked, wounded.

²⁶ Describe.

²⁷ Foreign, strange ; German, " fremd ;" in the northern dialects, " frem," or " fremmed," is used in the same sense.

²⁸ Language, dialect ; from Anglo-Saxon, " leden " or " læden," a corruption from " Latin."

²⁹ Pity.

³⁰ Twig, bough.

³¹ Raging, furious.

³² Believe.

³³ Revenge.

³⁴ Fear.

³⁵ Have mercy on yourself.

If that I verily the causes knew
 Of your disease,¹ if it lay in my might,
 I would amend it, ere that it were night,
 So wisely² help me the great God of kind.³
 And herbës shall I right enoughë find,
 To healë with your hurtës hastily."
 Then shriek'd this falcon yet more piteously
 Than ever she did, and fell to ground anon,
 And lay aswoon, as dead as lies a stone,
 Till Canacé had in her lap her take,
 Unto that time she gan of swoon awake :
 And, after that she out of swoon abraid,⁴
 Right in her hawkë's leden thus she said :
 "That pity runneth soon in gentle heart
 (Feeling his simil'tude in painë's smart),
 Is proved every day, as men may see,
 As well by work as by authority;⁵
 For gentle heartë kitheth⁶ gentleness.
 I see well, that ye have on my distress
 Compassión, my fairë Canacé,
 Of very womanly benignity
 That nature in your principles hath set.
 But for no hopë for to fare the bet,⁷
 But for t' obey unto your heartë free,
 And for to make others aware by me,
 As by the whelp chastis'd⁸ is the lón,
 Right for that cause and that conclusión,
 While that I have a leisure and a space,
 Mine harm I will confessen ere I pace."⁹
 And ever while the one her sorrow told,
 The other wept, as she to water wo'ld,¹⁰
 Till that the falcon bade her to be still,
 And with a sigh right thus she said her till :¹¹
 "Where I was bred (alas that ilkë¹² day !)
 And foster'd in a rock of marble gray
 So tenderly, that nothing ailed me,
 I wistë not what was adversity,
 Till I could flee full high under the sky.
 Then dwell'd a tercëlet¹³ me fastë by,
 That seem'd a well of allë gentleness ;
 All were he¹⁴ full of treason and falsónës,
 It was so wrapped under humble cheer,¹⁵
 And under hue of truth, in such mannëre,
 Under pleasáncë, and under busy pain,
 That no wight weened that he couldë feign,
 So deep in grain he dyed his colóura.
 Right as a serpent hides him under flow'ra,
 Till he may see his timë for to bite,
 Right so this god of lovë's hypocrite
 Did so his ceremonies and obeisáncës,
 And kept in semblance all his óbserváncës,
 That sounden unto¹⁶ gentleness of love.
 As on a tomb is all the fair above,
 And under is the corpse, which that ye wot,
 Such was this hypocrite, both cold and hot ;

¹ Distress. ² Surely. ³ Nature. ⁴ Awoke.

⁵ By experience as by text or doctrine.

⁶ Sheweth. ⁷ Better. ⁸ Instructed, corrected.

⁹ Depart. ¹⁰ As if she would dissolve into water.

¹¹ To her. ¹² Same.

¹³ The "tassel," or male of any species of hawk ; so called, according to Cotgrave, because he is one-third ("tiers") smaller than the female.

¹⁴ Although he was.

¹⁵ Under an aspect, mien, of humility.

¹⁶ Are consonant to. ¹⁷ Foolish, simple.

¹⁸ Greatly afraid lest he should die.

¹⁹ Both privately and in public.

²⁰ In no other way, on no other terms.

And in this wise he served his intent,
 That, save the fiend, none wistë what he meant :
 Till he so long had weeped and complain'd,
 And many a year his service to me feign'd,
 Till that mine heart, too piteous and too nice,¹⁷
 All innocent of his crowned malice,
 Forfeared of his death,¹⁸ as thoughtë me,
 Upon his oathës and his surëtý
 Granted him love, on this conditióun,
 That evermore mine honour and renown
 Were saved, bothë privy and apert ;¹⁹
 This is to say, that, after his desert,
 I gave him all my heart and all my thought
 (God wot, and he, that other wayës nought²⁰),
 And took his heart in change of mine for aye.
 But sooth is said, gone since many a day,
 A true wight and a thiefë think not one.²¹
 And when he saw the thing so far y-gone,
 That I had granted him fully my love,
 In such a wise as I have said above,
 And given him my truë heart as free
 As he swore that he gave his heart to me,
 Anon this tiger, full of doubleness,
 Fell on his knees with so great humbleness,
 With so high reverence, as by his cheer,²²
 So like a gentle lover in mannëre,
 So ravish'd, as it seemed, for the joy,
 That never Jason, nor Paris of Troy,—
 Jason? certes, nor ever other man,
 Since Lamech was, that alderfirst²³ began
 To lovë two, as writë folk befor, ²⁴
 Nor ever since the firstë man was born,
 Couldë no man, by twenty thousand part,
 Counterfeit the sophimës²⁴ of his art ;
 Nor worthy were t' unbuckle his galoche,²⁵
 Where doubleness of feigning should approach,
 Nor could so thank a wight, as he did me.
 His manner was a heaven for to see
 To any woman, were she ne'er so wise ;
 So painted he and kempt,²⁶ at point devise,²⁷
 As well his wordës as his countenance.
 And I so lov'd him for his obeisáncë,
 And for the truth I deemed in his heart,
 That, if so were that any thing him smart,²⁸
 All were it ne'er so lite,²⁹ and I it wist,
 Methought I felt death at my heartë twist.
 And shortly, so farforth this thing is went,³⁰
 That my will was his willë's instrument ;
 That is to say, my will obey'd his will
 In allë thing, as far as reason fill,³¹
 Keeping the boundës of my worship ever ;
 And never had I thing so lefe, or lever,³²
 As him, God wot, nor never shall no mo'.
 "This lasted longer than a year or two,
 That I supposed of him naught but good.

²¹ Do not think alike.

²² Mien.

²³ First of all. "And Lamech took unto him two wives : the name of the one Adah, and the name of the other Zillah" (Gen. iv. 19).

²⁴ Sophistries, beguilements.

²⁵ Shoe ; it seems to have been used in France, of a "sabot," or wooden shoe. The reader cannot fail to recall the same illustration in John i. 27, where the Baptist says of Christ : "He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me ; whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose."

²⁶ Combed, studied.

²⁷ With perfect precision.

²⁸ Little.

²⁹ Fell ; allowed.

³⁰ Pained.

³¹ So far did this go.

³² So dear, or dearer.

But finally, thus at the last it stood,
That fortune wouldë that he mustë twin¹
Out of that placë which that I was in.
Whe'er² me was woe, it is no question ;
I cannot make of it description.
For one thing dare I tellë boldly,
I know what is the pain of death thereby ;
Such harm I felt, for he might not byleve.³
So on a day of me he took his leave,
So sorrowful eke, that I ween'd verily,
That he had felt as muchë harm as I,
When that I heard him speak, and saw his hue.
But natheless, I thought he was so true,
And eke that he repairë should again
Within a little whilë, sooth to sayn,
And reason would eke that he mustë go
For his honour, as often happ'neth so,
That I made virtue of necessity,
And took it well, since that it mustë be.
As I best might, I hid from him my sorrow,
And took him by the hand, Saint John to
borrow,⁴
And said him thus ; 'Lo, I am yourës all ;
Be such as I have been to you, and shall.'
What he answer'd, it needs not to rehearse ;
Who can say bet⁵ than he, who can do worse ?
When he had all well said, then had he done.
Therefore behoveth him a full long spoon,
That shall eat with a fiend ; thus heard I say.
So at the last he mustë forth his way,
And forth he flew, till he came where him lest.
When it came him to purpose for to rest,
I trow that he had thilkë text in mind,
That allë thing repairing to his kind
Gladdeth himself ;⁶ thus say men, as I guess ;
Men love of [proper] kind newfangleness,⁷
As birdës do, that men in cages feed.
For though thou night and day take of them
heed,
And strew their cagë fair and soft as silk,
And give them sugar, honey, bread, and milk,
Yet, right anon as that his door is up,⁸
He with his feet will spurnë down his cup,
And to the wood he will, and wormës eat ;
So newëfangle be they of their meat,
And lovë novelties, of proper kind ;
No gentleness of bloodë may them bind.
So far'd this tercëlet, alas the day !
Though he were gentle born, and fresh, and gay,

And goodly for to see, and humble, and free,
He saw upon a time a kitë flee,
And suddenly he loved this kite so,
That all his love is clean from me y-go :
And hath his trothë falsed in this wise.
Thus hath the kite my love in her service,
And I am lorn⁹ withoutë remedy."

And with that word this falcon gan to cry,
And swooned eft¹⁰ in Canacë's barme.¹¹
Great was the sorrow, for that hawkë's harm,
That Canacë and all her women made ;
They wist not how they might the falcon glade.¹²
But Canacë home bare her in her lap,
And softëly in plasters gan her wrap,
There as she with her beak had hurt herself.
Now cannot Canacë but herbës delve
Out of the ground, and makë salvës new
Of herbës precious and fine of hue,
To healë with this hawk ; from day to night
She did her business, and all her might.
And by her beddë's head she made a mew,¹³
And cover'd it with velouettës blue,¹⁴
In sign of truth that is in woman seen ;
And all without the mew is painted green,
In which were painted all these falsë fowls,
As be these tidifes,¹⁵ tercëleta, and owls ;
And piës, on them for to cry and chide,
Right for despite were painted them beside.

Thus leave I Canacë her hawk keeping.
I will no more as now speak of her ring,
Till it come eft¹⁶ to purpose for to sayn
How that this falcon got her love again
Repentant, as the story telleth us,
By mediatiön of Camballus,
The kingë's son of which that I you told.
But hencëforth I will my process hold
To speak of áventures, and of batailles,
That yet was never heard so great marvailles.
First I will tellë you of Cambuscan,
That in his timë many a city wan ;
And after will I speak of Algarsife,
How he won Theodora to his wife,
For whom full oft in great períl he was,
N' had he¹⁷ been holpen by the horse of brass.
And after will I speak of Camballó,¹⁸
That fought in listës with the brethren two
For Canacë, ere that he might her win ;
And where I left I will again begin.

¹ Depart, separate.

² Whether.

³ Stay ; another form is "bleve ;" from Anglo-Saxon, "bellifan," to remain. Compare German, "bleiben."

⁴ Witness, pledge.

⁵ Better.

⁶ This sentiment, as well as the illustration of the bird which follows, is taken from the third book of Boethius, "De Consolatione Philosophiæ," metrum 2. It has thus been rendered in Chaucer's translation : "All things seek aye to their proper course, and all things rejoice on their returning again to their nature."

⁷ Men, by their own—their very—nature, are fond of novelty, and prone to inconstancy.

⁸ Immediately on his door being opened.

⁹ Lost, undone.

¹⁰ Again.

¹¹ Lap.

¹² Gladden.

¹³ Cage.

¹⁴ Blue velvets. Blue was the colour of truth, as green was that of inconstancy. In John Stowe's additions to Chaucer's works, printed in 1661, there is "A balade whiche Chaucer made against women inconstaunt," of

which the refrain is, "In stede of blew, thus may ye were al grene."

¹⁵ Supposed to be the titmouse.

¹⁶ Again, presently.

¹⁷ Had he not.

¹⁸ Unless we suppose this to be a namesake of the Camballo who was Canacë's brother—which is not at all probable—we must agree with Tyrwhitt that there is a mistake here ; which no doubt Chaucer would have rectified, if the tale had not been "left half-told." One manuscript reads "Caballo ;" and though not much authority need be given to a difference that may be due to mere omission of the mark of contraction over the "a," there is enough in the text to show that another person than the king's younger son is intended. The Squire promises to tell the adventures that befell each member of Cambuscan's family ; and in thorough consistency with this plan, and with the canons of chivalric story, would be "the marriage of Canacë to some knight who was first obliged to fight for her with her two brethren ; a method of courtship," adds Tyrwhitt, "very consonant to the spirit of ancient chivalry."

THE FRANKLIN'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.¹

"In faith, Squiër, thou hast thee well acquit,
And gentilly; I praisë well thy wit,"
Quoth the Franklin; "considering thy youthë
So feelingly thou speak'st, Sir, I aloue² thee,
As to my doom,³ there is none that is here
Of eloquencë that shall be thy peer,
If that thou live; God give thee goodë chance,
And in virtúe send thee continuáncë,
For of thy speaking I have great dainty.⁴
I have a son, and, by the Trinity,
It were me lever⁵ than twenty pound worth
land,
Though it right now were fallen in my hand,
He were a man of such discretión
As that ye be: fy on possession,
But if⁶ a man be virtuous withal.
I have my sonë snibbed,⁷ and yet shall,
For he to virtue listeth not t' intend,⁸
But for to play at dice, and to dispend,
And lose all that he hath, is his uságe;
And he had lever talkë with a page,
Than to commune with any gentle wight,
There he might learen gentilles aright."

"Straw for your gentillesë!" quoth our
Host.

"What? Frankëlin, pardie, Sir, well thou wot:⁹
That each of you must tellen at the least
A tale or two, or breakë his behest."¹⁰
"That know I well, Sir," quoth the Frankëlin;
"I pray you havë me not in disdain,
Though I to this man speak a word or two."
"Tell on thy tale, withoutë wordës mo'."
"Gladly, Sir Host," quoth he, "I will obey
Unto your will; now hearken what I say;
I will you not contráry in no wise,
As far as that my wittës may suffice.
I pray to God that it may pleasë you,
Then wot I well that it is good enow."

"These oldë gentle Bretons, in their days,
Of divers áventúrës madë lays,¹¹
Rhymeden in their firstë Breton tongue;
Which layës with their instruments they sung,
Or ellës readë them for their pleasáncë;
And one of them have I in remembráncë,
Which I shall say with good will as I can.
But, Sirs, because I am a borel¹² man,
At my beginning first I you beseech
Have me excused of my rudë speech."

¹ In the older editions, the verses here given as the prologue were prefixed to the Merchant's Tale, and put into his mouth. Tyrwhitt was abundantly justified, by the internal evidence afforded by the lines themselves, in transferring them to their present place.

² Allow, approve. ³ So far as my judgment goes.

⁴ Value, esteem.

⁵ It were dearer to me; I would rather.

⁶ Unless.

⁷ Rebuked; "snubbed."

⁸ Apply himself.

⁹ Knowest.

¹⁰ Promise.

¹¹ The "Breton Lays" were an important and curious element in the literature of the Middle Ages; they were originally composed in the Armorican language, and the chief collection of them extant was translated into French verse by a poetess calling herself "Marie," about the middle of the thirteenth century. But

I learned never rhetoric, certáin;
Thing that I speak, it must be bare and plain.
I slept never on the mount of Parnassó,
Nor learned Marcus Tullius Cicero.
Coloúrs know I none, withoutë dread,¹³
But such coloúrs as growen in the mead,
Or ellës such as men dye with or paint;
Coloúrs of rhetoric be to me quaint;¹⁴
My spirit feeleth not of such mattére.
But, if you list, my talë shall ye hear."

THE TALE.

In Armoric', that called is Bretagne,
There was a knight, that lov'd and did his pain¹⁵
To serve a lady in his bestë wise;
And many a labour, many a great emprise,
He for his lady wrought, ere she were won:
For she was one the fairest under sun,
And eke thereto come of so high kindréd,
That well unnethës¹⁶ durst this knight, for
dread,

Tell her his woe, his pain, and his distress.
But, at the last, she for his worthiness,
And namëly¹⁷ for his meek obeisáncë,¹⁸
Hath such a pity caught of his penáncë,¹⁹
That privily she fell of his accord
To take him for her husband and her lord
(Of such lordship as men have o'er their wives);
And, for to lead the more in bliss their lives,
Of his free will he swore her as a knight,
That never in all his life he day nor night
Should take upon himself no mastery
Against her will, nor kithe²⁰ her jealousy,
But her obey, and follow her will in all,
As any lover to his lady shall;
Save that the name of sovereignëty
That would he have, for shame of his degree.
She thanked him, and with full great humblëss
She saidë; "Sir, since of your gentleness
Ye proffer me to have so large a reign,
Ne wouldë God never betwixt us twain,
As in my guilt, were either war or strife:²¹
Sir, I will be your humble truë wife,
Have here my troth, till that my heartë brest."²²
Thus be they both in quiet and in rest.

For one thing, Sirs, safely dare I say,
That friends ever each other must obey,
If they will longë hold in company.
Love will not be constrain'd by mastery.
When mast'ry comes, the god of love anon
Beateth²³ his wings, and, farewell, he is gone.

though this collection was the most famous, and had doubtless been read by Chaucer, there were other British or Breton lays, and from one of those the Franklin's Tale is taken. Boccaccio has dealt with the same story in the "Decameron" and the "Philopopo," altering the circumstances to suit the removal of its scene to a southern clime.

¹³ Ende, unlearned.

¹⁴ Doubt.

¹⁵ Strange.

¹⁶ Devoted himself, strove.

¹⁷ Hardly, for fear that she would not entertain his suit.

¹⁸ Especially.

¹⁹ Suffering, distress.

²⁰ Show.

²¹ Would to God there may never be war or strife between us, through my fault.

²² Burst.

²³ Perhaps the true reading is "beteth"—prepares, makes ready, his wings for flight.

Love is a thing as any spirit free.
 Women of kind¹ desire liberty,
 And not to be constrained as a thrall;²
 And so do men, if soothly I say shall.
 Look who that is most patient in love,
 He is at his advantage all above.³
 Patience is a high virtue certain,
 For it vanquisheth, as these clerkës sayn,
 Thingës that rigour never should attain.
 For every word men may not chide or plain.
 Learnë to suffer, or, so may I go,⁴
 Ye shall it learn whether ye will or no.
 For in this world certain no wight there is,
 That he not doth or saith sometimes amiss.
 Ire, or sicknës, or constellatiön,⁵
 Wine, woe, or changing of complexiön,
 Causeth full oft to do amiss or spoken:
 On every wrong a man may not be wreaken.⁶
 After⁷ the timë must be temperance
 To every wight that can of⁸ governance.
 And therefore hath this worthy wisë knight
 (To live in easë) suff'rance her behight;⁹
 And she to him full wisely¹⁰ gan to swear
 That never should there be default in her.
 Here may men see a humble wife accord;
 Thus hath she ta'en her servant and her lord,
 Servant in love, and lord in marriâge.
 Then was he both in lordship and servage?
 Servage? nay, but in lordship all above,
 Since he had both his lady and his love:
 His lady certes, and his wife also,
 The which that law of love accordeth to.
 And when he was in this prosperity,
 Home with his wife he went to his country,
 Not far from Penmark,¹¹ where his dwelling was,
 And there he liv'd in bliss and in solace.¹²
 Who couldë tell, but¹³ he had wedded be,
 The joy, the ease, and the prosperity,
 That is betwixt a husband and his wife?
 A year and more lasted this blissful life,
 Till that this knight, of whom I spakë thus,
 That of Cairrud¹⁴ was call'd Arviragus,
 Shope¹⁵ him to go and dwell a year or twain
 In Engleland, that call'd was eke Britáin,
 To seek in armës worship and honoür
 (For all his lust¹⁶ he set in such laboür);
 And dwelled there two years; the book saith
 thus.

Now will I stint¹⁷ of this Arviragus,
 And speak I will of Dorigen his wife,
 That lov'd her husband as her heartë's life.
 For his absencë weepeth she and siketh,¹⁸
 As do these noble wivës when them liketh;
 She mourneth, waketh, wailëth, fasteth,
 plaineth;
 Desire of his presënce her so distraineth,
 That all this widë world she set at nought.

Her friendës, which that knew her heavy
 thought,
 Comfortë her in all that ever they may;
 They preachë her, they tell her night and day,
 That causëless she slays herself, alas!
 And every comfort possible in this case
 They do to her, with all their business,¹⁹
 And all to make her leave her heaviness.
 By process, as ye knowen every one,
 Men may so longë graven in a stone,
 Till some figure therein imprinted be:
 So long have they comforted her, till she
 Received hath, by hope and by reason,
 Th' imprinting of their consolatiön,
 Through which her greatë sorrow gan assuage;
 She may not always duren in such rage.
 And eke Arviragus, in all this care,
 Hath sent his letters home of his welfare,
 And that he will come hastily again,
 Or ellës had this sorrow her hearty-alain.
 Her friendës saw her sorrow gin to slake,²⁰
 And prayed her on knees for Goddë's sake
 To come and roamen in their company,
 Away to drive her darkë fantasy;
 And finally she granted that request,
 For well she saw that it was for the best.

Now stood her castle fastë by the sea,
 And often with her friendës walked she,
 Her to disport upon the bank on high,
 Where as she many a ship and bargë sigh,²¹
 Sailing their courses, where them list to go.
 But then was that a parcel²² of her woe,
 For to herself full oft, "Alas!" said she,
 "Is there no ship, of so many as I see,
 Will bringë home my lord? then were my heart
 All warish'd²³ of this bitter painë's smart."
 Another timë would she sit and think,
 And cast her eyen downward from the brink;
 But when she saw the grisly rockës blake,²⁴
 For very fear so would her heartë quake,
 That on her feet she might her not sustene:
 Then would she sit adown upon the green,
 And piteously into the sea behold,²⁵
 And say right thus, with careful sikës²⁶ cold:
 "Eternal God! that through thy purveyáncë
 Leadest this world by certain governance,
 In idle,²⁷ as men say, ye nothing make;
 But, Lord, these grisly fiendly rockës blake,
 That seem rather a foul confusiön
 Of work, than any fair creatiön
 Of such a perfect wisë God and stable,
 Why have ye wrought this work unreasonable?
 For by this work, north, south, or west, or east,
 There is not foster'd man, nor bird, nor beast:
 It doth no good, to my wit, but annoyeth.²⁸
 See ye not, Lord, how mankind it destroyeth?
 A hundred thousand bodies of mankind

1 By nature.

2 Slave.

3 Enjoys the highest advantages of all.

4 Prosper.

5 The influence of the planets.

6 Revenged.

7 According to.

8 Is capable of.

9 Promised.

10 Surely.

11 On the west coast of Brittany, between Brest and L'Orient. The name is composed of two British words, "pen," mountain, and "mark," region; it therefore means the mountainous country.

12 Delight.

13 Unless.

14 "The red city;" it is not known where it was situated.

15 Prepared, arranged.

16 Pleasure.

17 Cease speaking.

18 Sigheth.

19 Assiduity.

20 To diminish, slacken.

21 Saw.

22 Part.

23 Cured; French, "guérir," to heal, or recover from sickness.

24 Black.

25 Look out on the sea.

26 Painful sighs.

27 Idly, in vain.

28 Works mischief; from Latin, "noceo," I hurt.

Have rockis slain, all be they are in mind :¹
 Which maketh is so fair part of thy work,
 Thou madest it like to time even mark.²
 Then seemed it ye had a great cherte³
 Toward making : but how then may it be
 That ye such means make it to destroy?
 Which means do no good, but ever annoy.
 I wot well, clerkes will say as thou hast,⁴
 By argument, that all is for the best.
 Although I can the causes not y-know;
 But thilke⁵ God that made the wind to blow,
 As keep my lord, this is my conclusion :
 To clerkes leave I all expectation :
 But wouldest to God that all these rockis blake
 Were smitten into helle for his sake !
 These rockis shay mine hearte for the fear.⁶
 Thus would she say, with many a piteous tear.

Her friendes saw that it was no chert
 To roune by the sea, but discomfort,
 And shope them for to playe somewhere else.
 They leade her by rivers and by welles,
 And eke in other places delectabiles ;
 They dance, and they play at chess and tables.
 So on a day, right in the morning-tide,
 Unto a garden that was there beside,
 In which that they had made their ordinance⁷
 Of vicial and of other perveyance,
 They go and play them all the longe day :
 And this was on the sixth morrow of May,
 Which May had painted with his soft shew
 This garden full of leaves and of flow'rs :
 And craft of manne's hand so curiously
 Arrayed had this garden truly,
 That never was there garden of such price,⁸
 But if it were the very Paradise.
 Th' odor of flow'rs, and the freshe sight,
 Would have makid any hearte light
 That e'er was born, but if⁹ too great sickness
 Or too great sorrow held it in distress ;
 So full it was of beauty and plesance,
 And after dinner they began to dance
 And sing also, save Dorigen alone,
 Who made alway her complaint and her moan,
 For she saw not him on the dance go
 That was her husband, and her love also ;
 But rather she must a time abide,
 And with good hope let her sorrow slide.

Upon this dance, amongsts other men,
 Danced a squier before Dorigen,
 That fresher was, and yoller of array,
 As to my docten,¹⁰ than is the month of May.
 He sang and danced, passing any man
 That is or was since that the world began ;
 Therewith he was, if men should him describe,
 One of the beste faring¹¹ men alive,
 Young, strong, and virtuous, and rich, and wise,
 And well belov'd, and holden in great price.¹²
 And, shortly if the sooth I telle shall,
 Unsweeting¹³ of this Dorigen at all,

This lusty squier, servant to Venus,
 Which that y-called was Aurelius,
 Had lov'd her best of any creature
 Two year and more, as was his aventure ;¹⁴
 But never durst he tell her his grievance ;
 Withouten¹⁵ cup he drank all his pence.
 He was despaired, nothing durst he say,
 Save in his songis somewhat would he wray¹⁶
 His wee, as in a general complaining ;
 He said, he lov'd, and was belov'd nothing,
 Of such matter made he many lays,
 Songis, complaints, roundels, viridays ;¹⁷
 How that he durst not his sorrow tell,
 But longishid, as doth a Fury in hell ;
 And for he must, he said, as did Echo
 For Narcissus, that durst not tell her wee.
 In other manner than ye hear me say,
 He durst not to her his wee bewray.
 Save that paraventure sometimes at dances,
 Where young folk keep their chervances,
 It may well be he looked on her face
 In such a wise, as man that seeketh grace,
 But nothing wist she of his intent.
 Nath'less it happen'd, ere they thence¹⁸ went,
 Because that he was her neighbour,
 And was a man of worship and honest,
 And she had knownen him of time yore,¹⁹
 They fell in speech, and forth aye more and more
 Unto his purpose drew Aurelius ;
 And when he saw his time, he said thus :
 " Madam," quoth he, " by God that this world
 made,

So that I wist it might your hearte glade,²⁰
 I would, that day that your Arvingus
 Went over sea, that I, Aurelius,
 Had gone where I should never come again ;
 For well I wot my service is in vain.
 My guerdon²¹ is but bursting of mine heart.
 Madam, rue upon my paine's smart,
 For with a word ye may me slay or save.
 Here at your feet God would that I were
 grave."²²

I have now no leisure more to say :
 Have mercy, sweet, or you will do me dry."²³

She gan to look upon Aurelius :
 " Is this your will," quoth she, " and say ye
 thus ?

Ne'er erst,"²⁴ quoth she, " I wist what ye
 meant :

But now, Aurelius, I know your intent.
 By thilke²⁵ God that gave me soul and life,
 Never shall I be an untrue wife
 In word nor work, as far as I have wit ;
 I will be his to whom that I am knit ;
 Take this for final answer as of me."

But after that in play²⁶ thus made she,
 " Aurelius," quoth she, " by high God above,
 Yet will I grant you to be your love
 Since I you see so piteously complain¹ ;

¹ Though they are forgotten.

² Image.

³ Love, affection; from French, "cher," dear.

⁴ Pleaseth.

⁵ That.

⁶ Provise or arrangement.

⁷ So much to be valued or prized.

⁸ Uless.

⁹ In my judgment.

¹⁰ Most accomplished, best mannered.

¹¹ Esteem, value.

¹² Without the knowledge.

¹³ Fortune.

¹⁴ Betray.

¹⁵ Ballads; the "viridai" was an ancient French poem of two rhymes.

¹⁶ Thence; from the garden.

¹⁷ For a long time.

¹⁸ Gladly.

¹⁹ Reward.

²⁰ Desired.

²¹ Cause me to die.

²² Before.

²³ Physically, in just.

Lookë, what day that endëlong¹ Bretagne
 Ye remove all the rockës, stone by stone,
 That they not lettë² ship nor boat to gon,
 I say, when ye have made this coast so clean
 Of rockës, that there is no stonë seen,
 Then will I love you best of any man ;
 Have here my troth, in all that ever I can ;
 For well I wot that it shall ne'er betide.
 Let such folly out of your heartö glide.
 What dainty³ should a man have in his life
 For to go love another mannë's wife,
 That hath her body when that ever him liketh ?"
 Aurelius full often sorë siketh ;⁴
 "Is there none other grace in you ?" quoth he,
 "No, by that Lord," quoth she, "that maked
 me."

Woe was Aurelius when that he this heard,
 And with a sorrowful heart he thus answer'd.
 "Madame," quoth he, "this were an impossible.
 Then must I die of sudden death horrible."
 And with that word he turned him anon.

Then came her other friends many a one,
 And in the alleys roamed up and down,
 And nothing wist of this conclusiön,
 But suddenly began to revel new,
 Till that the brightë sun had lost his hue,
 For th' horizon had reft the sun his light
 (This is as much to say as it was night) ;
 And home they go in mirth and in solace ;
 Save only wretch'd Aurelius, alas !
 He to his house is gone with sorrowful heart.
 He said, he may not from his death astart.⁵
 Him seemed, that he felt his heartö cold.
 Up to the heav'n his handës gan he hold,
 And on his kneës bare he set him down,
 And in his raving said his orisoün.⁶
 For very woe out of his wit he braid ;⁷
 He wist not what he spake, but thus he said ;
 With piteous heart his plaint hath he begun
 Unto the gods, and first unto the Sun.
 He said ; "Apollo ! God and governoür
 Of every plantë, herbë, tree, and flow'r,
 That giv'st, after thy declinatiön,
 To each of them his time and his season,
 As thine herberow⁸ changeth low and high ;
 Lord Phœbus ! cast thy merciable⁹ eye
 On wretch'd Aurelius, which that am but lorn.¹⁰
 Lo, lord, my lady hath my death y-sworn,
 Withoutë guilt, but¹¹ thy benignity
 Upon my deadly heart have some pity.
 For well I wot, Lord Phœbus, if you lest,¹²
 Ye may me helpë, save my lady, best.
 Now vouchësafe, that I may you devise¹³
 How that I may be help,¹⁴ and in what wise.
 Your blissful sister, Lucina the sheen,¹⁵
 That of the sea is chief goddëss and queen,—
 Though Neptunus have deitiy in the sea,
 Yet emperess abovë him is she ;—
 Ye know well, lord, that, right as her desire
 Is to be quick'd¹⁶ and lighted of your fire,

For which she followeth you full busily,
 Right so the sea desireth naturally
 To follow her, as she that is goddëss
 Both in the sea and rivers more and less.
 Wherefore, Lord Phœbus, this is my request,
 Do this mirácle, or do¹⁷ mine heartë brest ;¹⁸
 That now, next at this oppositiön,
 Which in the sign shall be of the Liön,
 As prayë her so great a flood to bring,
 That five fathóm at least it overspring
 The highest rock in Armoric' Bretagne,
 And let this flood endure yearës twain :
 Then certes to my lady may I say,
 "Holdë your hest,¹⁹ the rockës be away."
 Lord Phœbus, this mirácle do for me,
 Pray her she go no faster course than ye ;
 I say this, pray your sister that she go
 No faster course than ye these yearës two :
 Then shall she be even at full alway,
 And spring-flood lastë bothë night and day.
 And but she²⁰ vouchësafe in such mannëre
 To grantë me my sov'reign lady dear,
 Pray her to sink every rock adown
 Into her owen darkë regioün
 Under the ground, where Pluto dwelleth in
 Or nevermore shall I my lady win.
 Thy temple in Delphos will I barefoot seek.
 Lord Phœbus ! see the tearës on my cheek
 And on my pain have some compassiön."
 And with that word in sorrow he fell down,
 And longë time he lay forth in a trance.
 His brother, which that knew of his penáncë,²¹
 Up caught him, and to bed he hath him brought.
 Despaired in this torment and this thought
 Let I this woeful creatürë lie ;
 Choose he for me whe'er²² he will live or die.

Arviragus with health and great honoür
 (As he that was of chivalry the flow'r)
 Is comë home, and other worthy men.
 Oh, blissful art thou now, thou Dorigen !
 Thou hast thy lusty husband in thine arms,
 The freshë knight, the worthy man of arms,
 That loveth thee as his own heartë's life :
 Nothing list him to be imaginatif²³
 If any wight had spoke, while he was out,
 To her of love ; he had of that no doubt ;²⁴
 He not intended²⁵ to no such mattëre,
 But danced, jousted, and made merry cheer.
 And thus in joy and bliss I let them dwell,
 And of the sick Aurelius will I tell.
 In languor and in torment furious
 Two year and more lay wretch'd Aurelius,
 Ere any foot on earth he mightë gon ;
 Nor comfort in this timë had he none,
 Save of his brother, which that was a clerk.²⁶
 He knew of all this woe and all this work ;
 For to none other creatüre certáin
 Of this matter he durst no wordë sayn ;
 Under his breast he bare it more secrë
 Than e'er did Pamphilus for Galatee.²⁷

¹ From end to end of.

² Value, pleasure.

³ Prayer.

⁴ Dwelling, situation.

⁵ Undone.

⁶ Tell, explain.

⁷ Diana the bright.

⁸ Prevent.

⁹ Sigheth.

¹⁰ Wandered, went.

¹¹ Compassionate.

¹² Pleaseth.

¹³ Helped.

See note 17, page 37.

¹⁶ Quickened.

¹⁷ Cause.

¹⁸ Burst.

¹⁹ Promise.

²⁰ If she do not.

²¹ Distress.

²² Whether.

²³ He cared not to fancy.

²⁴ Fear, suspicion.

²⁵ Occupied himself with.

²⁶ Scholar, man in holy orders.

²⁷ In a Latin poem, very popular in Chaucer's time, Pamphilus relates his amour with Galatea, setting

His breast was whole without¹ for to seen,
But in his heart aye was the arrow keen,
And well ye know that of a sursanure¹
In surgery is perilous the cure,
But² men might touch the arrow or come
thereby.

His brother wept and wailed privily,
Till at the last him fell in remembrance,
That while he was at Orleans³ in France,—
As young⁴ clerk⁵, that be likerous⁴
To readen art⁵s that be curious,
Seeken in every hulk and every hern⁵
Particular sciēces for to learn,—
He him remember'd, that upon a day
At Orleans in study a book he say⁶
Of magic natural, which his fellaw,
That was that time a bachelor of law,
All⁷ were he there to learn another craft,
Had privily upon his desk y-laft;
Which book spake much of operatiōns
Touching the eight-and-twenty mansiōns
That long⁸ to the Moon, and such folly
As in our day⁸s is not worth a fly;
For holy church's faith, in our believe,⁸
Us suff'reth none illusiōn to grieve.
And when this book was in his remembrance,
Anon for joy his heart began to dance,
And to himself he said⁹ privily;
"My brother shall be warish'd⁹ hastily:
For I am sicker¹⁰ that there be sciēces,
By which men mak¹⁰ divers apparences,
Such as these subtle tregetours¹¹ play.
For oft at feast¹⁰s have I well heard say,
That tregetours, within a hall¹⁰ large,
Have made come in a water and a barge,
And in the hall¹⁰ rowen up and down.
Sometimes hath seemed come a grim lion,
And sometimes flowers spring as in a mead;
Sometimes a vine, and grap¹⁰s white and red;
Sometimes a castle all of lime and stone;
And, when them liked, voided¹² it anon:
Thus seemed it to every mann¹⁰'s sight.
Now then conclude I thus; if that I might
At Orleans some old¹⁰ fellow find,
That hath these Moon¹⁰'s mansiōns in mind,
Or other magic natural above,
He should well make my brother have his love.
For with an appearānce a clerk¹² may make,
To mann¹⁰'s sight, that all the rock¹⁰s blake
Of Brétagne wer¹⁰ voided¹² every one,
And shipp¹⁰s by the brink¹⁰ come and gon,
And in such form endure a day or two;
Then were my brother warish'd⁹ of his woe,
Then must she need¹⁰s hold¹⁰ her behest,¹⁴
Or ell¹⁰s he shall shame her at the least."
Why should I make a longer tale of this?

out with the idea adopted by our poet in the lines that follow.

¹ A wound healed on the surface, but festering beneath. ² Except.

³ Where was a celebrated and very famous university, afterwards eclipsed by that of Paris. It was founded by Philip le Bel in 1312.

⁴ Eager, curious.

⁵ Every nook and corner. Anglo-Saxon, "healc," a nook; "hyrn," a corner. ⁶ Saw. ⁷ Though.

⁸ Belief, creed.

⁹ Cured.

¹⁰ Certain.

¹¹ Tricksters, jugglers. The word is probably derived

Unto his brother's bed he comen is,
And such comfort he gave him, for to gon
To Orleans, that he upstart anon,
And on his way forth-ward then is he fare,¹⁵
In hope for to be lissed¹⁶ of his care.

When they were come almost to that city,
But if it were¹⁷ a two furlong or three,
A young clerk roaming by himself they met,
Which that in Latin thriftily¹⁸ them gret.¹⁹
And after that he said a wondrous thing;
"I know," quoth he, "the cause of your
coming;"

And ere they farther any foot¹⁰ went,
He told them all that was in their intent.
The Breton clerk him asked of fellaws
The which he hadd¹⁰ known in old¹⁰ daws,²⁰
And he answer'd him that they dead¹⁰ were,
For which he wept full often many a tear.
Down off his horse Aurelius light anon,
And forth with this magician is he gone
Home to his house, and made him well at ease;
Them lacked no vitail that might them please.
So well-array'd a house as there was one,
Aurelius in his life saw never none.
He shewed him, ere they went to suppre,
Forest¹⁰s, park¹⁰s, full of wild¹⁰ deer.
There saw he hart¹⁰s with their horn¹⁰s high,
The greatest that were ever seen with eye.
He saw of them an hundred slain with hounds,
And some with arrows bleed of bitter wounds.
He saw, when voided²¹ were the wild¹⁰ deer,
These falconers upon a fair rivere,
That with their hawk¹⁰s have the heron slain.
Then saw he knight¹⁰s jousting in a plain.
And after this he did him such pleasānce,
That he him shew'd his lady on a dance,
On which himself¹⁰ danced, as him thought.
And when this master, that this magic wrought,
Saw it was time, he clapp'd his hand¹⁰s two,
And farewell, all the revel is y-go.²²
And yet remov'd they never out of the house,
While they saw all the sight¹⁰s marvellous;
But in his study, where his book¹⁰s be,
They satt¹⁰ still, and no wight but they three.

To him this master called his squier,
And said him thus, "May we go to supper?
Almost an hour it is, I undertake,
Since I you bade our supper for to make,
When that these worthy men went¹⁰ with me
Into my study, where my book¹⁰s be."
"Sir," quoth this squier, "when it liketh you,
It is all ready, though ye will right now."
"Go we then sup," quoth he, "as for the best;
These amorous folk some tim¹⁰ must have rest."
At after supper fell they in treaty
What summ¹⁰ should this master's guerdon be,

—in "treget," deceit or imposture—from the French "trebuchet," a military machine; since it is evident that much and elaborate machinery must have been employed to produce the effects afterwards described. Another derivation is from the Low Latin, "tricator," a deceiver. ¹⁵ Vanished, removed.

¹⁶ Learned man.

¹⁷ Keep her promise.

¹⁸ Gone.

¹⁹ Eased of, released from; another form of "less" or "lessen."

²⁰ Greeted.

²¹ All but.

²² Civilly.

²³ Passed away.

²⁴ Gone, removed.

To remove all the rockës of Bretagne,
And eke from Gironde¹ to the mouth of Seine.
He made it strange,² and swore, so God him
save,

Less than a thousand pound he would not have,
Nor gladly for that sum he would not gon.³

Aurelius with blissful heart anon

Answered thus; "Fie on a thousand pound!
This widë world, which that men say is round,
I would it give, if I were lord of it.

This bargain is full-driv'n, for we be knit;⁴

Ye shall be payed truly by my troth.

But lookë, for no negligence or sloth,

Ye tarry us here no longer than to-morrow."

"Nay," quoth the clerk, "have here my faith
to borrow."⁵

To bed is gone Aurelius when him lest,
And well-nigh all that night he had his rest,
What for his labour, and his hope of bliss,
His woeful heart of penance had a liss.⁶

Upon the morrow, when that it was day,

Unto Bretagne they took the rightë way,

Aurelius and this magicián beside,

And be descended where they would abide:

And this was, as the bookës me remember,

The coldë frosty season of December.

Phœbus wax'd old, and huëd like latoun,⁷

That in his hotë declinatioún

Shone as the burned gold, with streamës⁸
bright;

But now in Capricorn adown he light,

Where as he shone full pale, I dare well sayn.

The bitter frostës, with the sleet and rain,

Destroyed have the green in every yard.⁹

Janus sits by the fire with double beard,

And drinketh of his bugle horn the wine:

Before him stands the brawn of tusked swine,

And "nowel"¹⁰ crieth every lusty man.

Aurelius, in all that ev'r he can,

Did to his master cheer and reverence,

And prayed him to do his diligence

To bringë him out of his painë's smart,

Or with a sword that he would slit his heart.

This subtle clerk such ruth¹¹ had on this man,

That night and day he sped him, that he can,

To wait a time of his conclusiún;

This is to say, to make illusiún,

By such an áppearánce of jugglery

(I know no termës of astrology),

That she and every wight should ween and say,

That of Bretagne the rockës were away,

Or else they werë sunken under ground.

So at the last he hath a timë found

To make his japës¹² and his wretchedness

Of such a superstitious cursedness.¹³

His tables Toletanës¹⁴ forth he brought,
Full well corrected, that there lacked nought,
Neither his collect, nor his expanse years,
Neither his rootës, nor his other gears,
As be his centres, and his arguments,
And his proportional conveniënts
For his equatións in everything.

And by his eightë spheres in his working,
He knew full well how far Alnath¹⁵ was shove
From the head of that fix'd Aries above,
That in the ninthë sphere consider'd is.
Full subtilly he calcul'ed all this.

When he had found his firstë mansiún,

He knew the remnant by proportiún;

And knew the rising of his moonë well,

And in whose fa e, and term, and every deal;

And knew full well the moonë's mansiún

Accordant to his operatiún;

And knew also his other observánces,

For such illusións and such meschances,¹⁶

As heathen folk used in thilkë days.

For which no longer made he delays;

But through his magic, for a day or tway,¹⁷

It seemed all the rockës were away.

Aurelius, which yet despaired is

Whe'er¹⁸ he shall have his love, or fare amiss,

Awaited night and day on this mirácle:

And when he knew that there was none ob-
stácle,

That voided¹⁹ were these rockës every one,

Down at his master's feet he fell anon,

And said; "I, woeful wretch'd Aurelius,

Thank you, my Lord, and lady mine Venús,

That me have holpen from my carës cold."

And to the temple his way forth hath he hold',

Where as he knew he should his lady see.

And when he saw his time, anon right he

With dreadful²⁰ heart and with full humble
cheer²¹

Saluted hath his sovereign lady dear.

"My rightful Lady," quoth this woeful man,

"Whom I most dread, and love as I best can,

And lothest were of all this world displease,

Were't not that I for you have such disease,²²

That I must die here at your foot anon,

Nought would I tell how me is woebegone.

But certes either must I die or plain;²³

Ye slay me guiltëless for very pain.

But of my death though that ye have no ruth,

Advise you, ere that ye break your truth:

Repentë you, for thilkë God above,

Ere ye me slay because that I you love.

For, Madame, well ye wot what ye have hight;²⁴

Not that I challenge anything of right

Of you, my sovereign lady, but of grace;

¹ The river, formed by the union of the Dordogne and Garonne, on which Bourdeaux stands.

² A matter of difficulty. See note 38, page 56.

³ And even for that sum he would not willingly go to work.

⁴ Agreed.

⁵ I pledge my faith on it.

⁶ Had a respite, relief, from anguish.

⁷ Coloured like copper or latten.

⁸ Beams.

⁹ Court-yard, garden.

¹⁰ "Noël," the French for Christmas—derived from "natalis," and signifying that on that day Christ was born—came to be used as a festive cry by the people on solemn occasions.

¹¹ Pity.

¹² Tricks.

¹³ Detestable villany.

¹⁴ Toledan tables; the astronomical tables composed by order of Alphonso II., King of Castile, about 1250, and so called because they were adapted to the city of Toledo.

¹⁵ "Alnath," says Mr Wright, was "the first star in the horns of Aries, whence the first mansion of the moon is named."

¹⁶ Wicked devices.

¹⁷ Another and better reading is "a week or two."

¹⁸ Whether.

¹⁹ Removed.

²⁰ Fearful.

²¹ Mien.

²² Distress, affliction.

²³ Bewail.

²⁴ Promised.

But in a garden yond', in such a place,
Ye wot right well what ye behightē me,
And in mine hand your trothē plighted ye,
To love me best; God wot ye saidē so,
Albeit that I unworthy am thereto;
Madame, I speak it for th' honour of you,
More than to save my heartē's life right now;
I have done so as ye commanded me,
And if ye vouchēsafe, ye may go see.
Do as you list, have your beheat in mind,
For, quick or dead, right there ye shall me find;
In you lies all to do¹ me live or dey;²
But well I wot the rockēs be away."

He took his leave, and she astonish'd stood;
In all her face was not one drop of blood:
She never ween'd t' have come in such a trap.
"Alas!" quoth she, "that ever this should hap!
For ween'd I ne'er, by possibility,
That such a monster or marvail might be;
It is against the process of natūre."
And home she went a sorrowful creatūre;
For very fear unnethēs³ may she go.
She weeped, wailed, all a day or two,
And swooned, that it ruthē was to see:
But why it was, to no wight toldē she,
For out of town was gone Arviragus.
But to herself she spake, and saidē thus,
With facē pale, and full sorrowful cheer,
In her complaint, as ye shall after hear.

"Alas!" quoth she, "on thee, Fortūne, I
plain,⁴

That unware hast me wrapped in thy chain,
From which to scapē, wot I no succour,
Save only death, or ellēs dishonour;
One of these two behoveth me to choose.
But natheless, yet had I lever⁵ lose
My life, than of my body havē shame,
Or know myselfē false, or lose my name;
And with my death I may be quit y-wis.⁶
Hath there not many a noble wife, ere this,
And many a maiden, slain herself, alas!
Rather than with her body do trespass?
Yes, certes; lo, these stories bear witness.⁷
When thirty tyrants full of cursedness⁸
Had slain Phidon in Athens at the feast,
They cōmmanded his daughters to arrest,
And bringē them before them, in despite,
All naked, to fulfil their foul delight;
And in their father's blood they made them
dance

Upon the pavement,—God give them mischance.
For which these woeful maidens, full of dread,
Rather than they would lose their maiden-
head,

They privily be start⁹ into a well,
And drowned themselves, as the bookēs tell.
They of Messenē let inquire and seek

¹ Cause.

² Die.

³ Scarcely.

⁴ Complain.

⁵ Sooner, rather.

⁶ I may certainly purchase my exemption.

⁷ They are all taken from the book of St Jerome
"Contra Jovinianum," from which the Wife of Bath
drew so many of her ancient instances. See note 5,
page 71.

⁸ Wickedness.

⁹ Suddenly leaped.

¹⁰ Forcibly bereft.

¹¹ Caught, clasped.

¹² Pluck away by force.

¹³ Same.

Of Lacedæmon fifty maidens eke,
On which they wouldē do their lechery:
But there was none of all that company
That was not slain, and with a glad intent
Chose rather for to die, than to assent
To be oppressed¹⁰ of her maidenhead.
Why should I then to dien be in dread?
Lo, eke the tryrant Aristoclides,
That lov'd a maiden hight Stimphalides,
When that her father slain was on a night,
Unto Diana's temple went she right,
And hent¹¹ the image in her handēs two,
From which imāge she wouldē never go;
No wight her handēs might off it arace,¹²
Till she was slain right in the selfē¹³ place.
Now since that maidens haddē such despite
To be defouled with man's foul delight,
Well ought a wife rather herself to slē,¹⁴
Than be defouled, as it thinketh me.
What shall I say of Hasdrubalē's wife,
That at Carthage bereft herself of life?
For, when she saw the Romans win the town,
She took her children all, and skipt adown
Into the fire, and rather chose to die,
Than any Roman did her villainy.
Hath not Lucretia slain herself, alas!
At Romū, when that she oppressed¹⁵ was
Of Tarquin? for her thought it was a shame
To livē, when she haddē lost her name.
The seven maidens of Milesie also
Have slain themselves for very dread and woe,
Rather than folk of Gaul them should oppress.
More than a thousand stories, as I guess,
Could I now tell as touching this mattēre.
When Abradate was slain, his wife so dear¹⁶
Herselfē slew, and let her blood to glide
In Abradatē's woundēs, deep and wide,
And said, 'My body at the leastē way
There shall no wight defoul, if that I may.'
Why should I more examples hereof sayn?
Since that so many have themselvēs slain,
Well rather than they would defouled be,
I will conclude that it is bet¹⁷ for me
To slay myself, than be defouled thus.
I will be true unto Arviragus,
Or ellēs slay myself in some mannēre,
As did Demotionē's daughter dear,
Because she wouldē not defouled be.
O Sedasus, it is full great pity
To readē how thy daughters died, alas!
That slew themselves for suchē manner cas.¹⁸
As great a pity was it, or well more,
The Theban maiden, that for Nicanōr
Herselfē slew, right for such manner woe.
Another Theban maiden did right so;
For one of Macedon had her oppress'd,
She with her death her maidenhead redress'd.¹⁹

¹⁴ Slay.

¹⁵ Ravished.

¹⁶ Panthea. Abradatas, King of Susa, was an ally of
the Assyrians against Cyrus; and his wife was taken at
the conquest of the Assyrian camp. Struck by the
honourable treatment she received at the captor's hands,
Abradatas joined Cyrus, and fell in battle against his
former allies. His wife, inconsolable at his loss, slew
herself immediately.

¹⁷ Better.

¹⁸ In circumstances of the same kind.

¹⁹ Avenged, vindicated.

What shall I say of Niceratús' wife,
That for such case bereft herself her life?
How true was eke to Alcibiades
His love, that for to dien rather chese,¹
Than for to suffer his body unburied be?
Lo, what a wife was Alceste?² quoth she.
"What saith Homér of good Penelope?
All Greecé knoweth of her chastity.
Pardie, of Laodamia is written thus,
That when at Troy was slain Protesilaus,³
No longer would she live after his day.
The same of noble Porcia tell I may;
Withouté Brutus couldé she not live,
To whom she did all whole her hearté give.⁴
The perfect wifhood of Artemisie⁵
Honoured is throughout all Barbaria.
O Teuta⁶ queen, thy wifely chastity
To allé wivés may a mirror be."⁶

Thus plained Dorigen a day or tway,
Purposing ever that she wouldé dey;⁷
But natheless upon the thirdé night
Home came Arviragus, the worthy knight,
And asked her why that she wept so sore?
And she gan weepen ever longer more.
"Alas," quoth she, "that ever I was born!
Thus have I said," quoth she; "thus have I
sworn."

And told him all, as ye have heard before:
It needeth not rehearse it you no more.
This husband with glad cheer,⁸ in friendly wise,
Answer'd and said, as I shall you devise.⁹
"Is there aught ellés, Dorigen, but this?"
"Nay, nay," quoth she, "God help me so, as
wis¹⁰

This is too much, an'¹¹ it were Goddè's will."
"Yea, wife," quoth he, "let sleepé what is still,
It may be well par'venture yet to-day.
Ye shall your trothé holdé, by my fay.
For, God so wisly¹² have mercy on me,
I had well lever sticked for to be,¹³
For very lové which I to you have,
But if ye should your trothé keep and save.
Truth is the highest thing that man may keep."
But with that word he burst anon to weep;
And said; "I you forbid, on pain of death,
That never, while you lasteth life or breath,
To no wight tell ye this mis'aventure;
As I may best, I will my woe endure,
Nor make no countenance of heaviness,
That folk of you may deemé harm, or guess."
And forth he call'd a squiër and a maid.
"Go forth anon with Dorigen," he said,

¹ Chose.

² Her husband. She begged the gods, after his death, that but three hours' converse with him might be allowed her; the request was granted; and when her dead husband, at the expiry of the time, returned to the world of shades, she bore him company.

³ The daughter of Cato of Utica, Porcia married Marcus Brutus, the friend and the assassin of Julius Cæsar; when her husband died by his own hand after the battle of Philippi, she committed suicide, it is said, by swallowing live coals—all other means having been removed by her friends.

⁴ Artemisia, Queen of Caria, who built to her husband, Mausolus, the splendid monument which was accounted among the wonders of the world; and who mingled her husband's ashes with her daily drink. "Barbarie" is used in the Greek sense, to designate the non-Hellenic peoples of Asia.

"And bringé her to such a place anon."
They take their leave, and on their way they
gon:

But they not wisté why she thither went;
He would to no wight tellé his intent.

This squiër, which that hight Aurelius,
On Dorigen that was so amorous,
Of áventuré happen'd her to meet
Amid the town, right in the quickest¹⁴ street,
As she was bound¹⁵ to go the way forthright
Toward the garden, there as she had hight.¹⁶
And he was to the garden-ward also;
For well he spiéd when she wouldé go
Out of her house, to any manner place;
But thus they met, of áventure or grace,
And he saluted her with glad intent,
And asked of her whitherward she went.
And she answered, half as she were mad,
"Unto the garden, as my husband bade,
My trothé for to hold, alas! alas!"
Aurelius gan to wonder on this case,
And in his heart had great compassión
Of her, and of her lamentation,
And of Arviragus, the worthy knight,
That bade her hold all that she haddé hight;
So loth him was his wife should break her truth.
And in his heart he caught of it great ruth,¹⁷
Considering the best on every side,
That from his lust yet were him lever¹⁸ abide,
Than do so high a churlish wretchedness¹⁹
Against franchise,²⁰ and allé gentleness;
For which in fewé words he saidé thus;

"Madame, say to your lord Arviragus,
That since I see the greaté gentleness
Of him, and eke I see well your distress,
That him were lever¹⁸ have shame (and that
were ruth¹⁷)

Than ye to me should breaké thus your truth,
I had well lever aye to suffer woe,
Than to depart²¹ the love betwixt you two.
I you release, Madame, into your hond,
Quit ev'ry surément²² and ev'ry bond,
That ye have made to me as herebeforn,
Since thilké timé that ye weré born.
Have here my truth, I shall you ne'er reprove²³
Of no behest;²⁴ and here I take my leave,
As of the truest and the besté wife
That ever yet I knew in all my life.
But every wife beware of her behest;
On Dorigen remember at the least.
Thus can a squiër do a gentle deed,
As well as can a knight, withouté drede."²⁵

⁵ Queen of Illyria, who, after her husband's death, made war on and was conquered by the Romans, B.C. 228.

⁶ At this point, in some manuscripts, occur the following two lines:—

"The samé thing I say of Billia,
Of Rhodogone and of Valeria."

⁷ Die.

⁸ Demeanour.

⁹ Relate.

¹⁰ Assuredly.

¹¹ If.

¹² Certainly.

¹³ I had rather be slain.

¹⁴ Readiest.

¹⁵ Prepared; going. To "boun" or "bown" is a good old word, whence comes our word "bound," in the sense of "on the way."

¹⁶ Promised.

¹⁷ Pity.

¹⁸ Rather.

¹⁹ Rude outrage.

²⁰ Generosity.

²¹ Sunder, split up.

²² Surety.

²³ Reproach.

²⁴ Of no (breach of) promise.

²⁵ Doubt.

She thanked him upon her kneës bare,
And home unto her husband is she fare,¹
And told him all, as ye have heardë said;
And, trustë me, he was so well apaid,²
That it were impossible me to write.
Why should I longer of this case indite?
Arviragus and Dorigen his wife
In sov'reign blissë leddë forth their life;
Ne'er after was there anger them between;
He cherish'd her as though she were a queen,
And she was to him true for evermore;
Of these two folk ye get of me no more.

Aurelius, that his cost had all forlorn,³
Cursed the time that ever he was born.
"Alas!" quoth he, "alas that I behight⁴
Of pure⁵ gold a thousand pound of weight
To this philosopher! how shall I do?
I see no more, but that I am fordo.⁶
Mine heritagë must I needës sell,
And be a beggar; here I will not dwell,
And shamen all my kindred in this place,
But⁷ I of him may gettë better grace.
But natheless I will of him assay
At certain dayës year by year to pay,
And thank him of his greatë courtesy.
My trothë will I keep, I will not lie."
With heartë sore he went unto his coffer,
And broughtë gold unto this philosópher,
The value of five hundred pound, I guess,
And him beseeched, of his gentleness,
To grant him dayës of⁸ the remenant;
And said; "Master, I dare well make avaunt,
I failed never of my truth as yet.
For sickerly my debtë shall be quit
Towardës you, how so that e'er I fare
To go a-begging in my kirtle bare:
But would ye vouchësafe, upon surety,
Two year, or three, for to respitë me,
Then were I well, for ellës must I sell
Mine heritage; there is no more to tell."

This philosópher soberly⁹ answe'r'd,
And saidë thus, when he these wordës heard;
"Have I not holden covenant to thee?"
"Yes, certes, well and truëly," quoth he.
"Hast thou not had thy lady as thee liked?"
"No, no," quoth he, and sorrowfully siked.¹⁰
"What was the causë? tell me if thou can."
Aurelius his tale anon began,
And told him all as ye have heard before,
It needeth not to you rehearse it more.
He said, "Arviragus of gentleness
Had lever¹¹ die in sorrow and distress,
Than that his wife were of her trothë false."
The sorrow of Dorigen he told him als',¹²
How loth her was to be a wicked wife,

And that she lever had lost that day her life;
And that her troth she swore through innocene;
She ne'er erst¹³ had heard speak of apparënce;¹⁴
That made me have of her so great pity,
And right as freely as he sent her to me,
As freely sent I her to him again:
This is all and some, there is no more to sayn."
The philosópher answer'd; "Levë¹⁵ brother,
Evereach of you did gently to the other;
Thou art a squiër, and he is a knight,
But God forbiddë, for his blissful might,
But if a clerk could do a gentle deed
As well as any of you, it is no drede.¹⁶
Sir, I releasë thee thy thousand pound,
As thou right now were crept out of the ground,
Nor ever ere now haddest knowen me.
For, Sir, I will not take a penny of thee
For all my craft, nor naught for my travail;¹⁷
Thou hast y-paid well for my vitaille;
It is enough; and farewell, have good day."
And took his horse, and forth he went his way.

Lordings, this question would I askë now,
Which was the mostë free,¹⁸ as thinketh you?
Now tellë me, ere that ye farther wend.
I can¹⁹ no more, my tale is at an end.

THE DOCTOR'S TALE.²⁰

THE PROLOGUE

["YEA, let that passë," quoth our Host, "as
now.
Sir Doctor of Physik, I prayë you,
Tell us a tale of some honest mattëre."
"It shall be done, if that ye will it hear,"
Said this Doctör; and his tale gan anon.
"Now, good men," quoth he, "hearken every
ene."]

THE TALE.

There was, as telleth Titus Livius,²¹
A knight, that called was Virginus,
Full filled of honoür and worthiness,
And strong of friendës, and of great richës.
This knight one daughter haddë by his wife;
No children had he more in all his life.
Fair was this maid in excellent beauty
Aboven ev'ry wight that man may see;
For nature had with sov'reign diligence
Y-formed her in so great excellence,
As though she wouldë say, "Lo, I, Nature,

which it was the fashion to propose for debate in the
medieval "courts of love."¹⁹ Know, can tell.

²⁰ The authenticity of the prologue is questionable.
It is found in one manuscript only; other manuscripts
give other prologues, more plainly not Chaucer's than
this; and some manuscripts have merely a colophon to
the effect that "Here endeth the Franklin's Tale and
beginneth the Physician's Tale without a prologue."
The Tale itself is the well-known story of Virginia, with
several departures from the text of Livy. Chaucer
probably followed the "Romance of the Rose" and
Gower's "Confessio Amantis," in both of which the
story is found. ²¹ Livy, Book iii. cap. 44, et seqq.

¹ Gone.

² Satisfied.

³ Utterly lost.

⁴ Promised.

⁵ Purified, refined.

⁶ Ruined, undone.

⁷ Unless.

⁸ Time to pay up.

⁹ Gravely.

¹⁰ Sighed.

¹¹ Rather.

¹² Also.

¹³ Before.

¹⁴ Such an ocular deception, or apparition—more properly, disappearance—as the removal of the rocks.

¹⁵ Dear.

¹⁶ Doubt.

¹⁷ Labour, pains.

¹⁸ Generous, liberal; the same question is stated at the end of Boccaccio's version of the story in the "Philopopo," where the queen determines in favour of Arviragus. The question is evidently one of those

Thus can I form and paint a creature,
When that me list; who can me counterfeit?
Pygmalion? not though he aye forge and beat,
Or grave, or paint: for I dare well sayn,
Apelles, Zeuxis, should work in vain,
Either to grave, or paint, or forge, or beat,
If they presumed me to counterfeit.
For he that is the former principal,
Hath made me his vicar-general
To form and painten earthly creatürs
Right as me list, and all thing in my cure¹ is,
Under the moonē, that may wane and wax.
And for my work right nothing will I ax;²
My lord and I be full of one accord.
I made her to the worship³ of my lord;
So do I all mine other creatürs,
What colour that they have, or what figüres."
Thus seemeth me that Nature would say.

This maiden was of age twelve year and
tway,
In which that Nature haddē such delight.
For right as she can paint a lily white,
And red a rosē, right with such paintüre
She painted had this noble creatüre,
Ere she was born, upon her limbēs free,
Where as by right such colours should be:
And Phoebus dyed had her tresses great,
Like to the streamēs⁴ of his burned heat.
And if that excellent was her beauty,
A thousand-fold more virtuous was she.
In her there lacked no condition,
That is to praise, as by discretión.
As well in ghost⁵ as body chaste was she:
For which she flower'd in virginity,
With all humility and abstinence,
With allē temperance and patience,
With measure⁶ eke of bearing and array.
Discreet she was in answering alway,
Though she were wise as Pallas, dare I sayn;
Her faconde⁷ eke full womanly and plain,
No counterfeited termēs haddē she
To seemē wise; but after her degree
She spake, and all her wordēs more and less
Sounding in virtue and in gentleness.
Shamefast she was in maiden's shamefastness,
Constant in heart, and ever in business⁸
To drive her out of idle sluggardy:
Bacchus had of her mouth right no mast'ry.
For wine and slothē⁹ do Venüs increase,
As men in fire will casten oil and grease.
And of her owen virtue, unconstrain'd,
She had herself full often sick y-feign'd,
For that she wouldē flee the company,
Where likely was to treaten of folly,
As is at feasts, at revels, and at dances,
That be occasions of dalliānces.
Such thingēs makē children for to be
Too soonē ripe and bold, as men may see,
Which is full perilous, and hath been yore;¹⁰

For all too soonē may she learnē lore
Of boldēness, when that she is a wife.

And ye mistrēsses,¹¹ in your oldē life
That lordēs' daughters have in governānce,
Takē not of my wordēs displeasānce:
Thinkē that ye be set in governings
Of lordēs' daughters only for two things;
Either for ye have kept your honesty,
Or else for ye have fallen in frailty
And knowē well enough the oldē dance,
And have forsaken fully such meschance¹²
For evermore; therefore, for Christē's sake,
To teach them virtue look that ye not slake.¹³
A thief of venison, that hath forlaft¹⁴
His lik'rousness,¹⁵ and all his oldē craft,
Can keep a forest best of any man;
Now keep them well, for if ye will ye can.
Look well, that ye unto no vice assent,
Lest ye be damned for your wick'¹⁶ intent,
For whoso doth, a traitor is certāin;
And takē keep¹⁷ of that I shall you sayn;
Of allē treason, sov'reign pestilence
Is when a wight betrayeth innocence.
Ye fathers, and ye mothers eke also,
Though ye have children, be it one or mo',
Yours is the charge of all their surveyance,¹⁸
While that they be under your governance.
Beware, that by example of your living,
Or by your negligence in chastising,
That they not perish: for I dare well say,
If that they do, ye shall it dear abeye.¹⁹
Under a shepherd soft and negligent
The wolf hath many a sheep and lamb to-rent.
Sufficē this example now as here,
For I must turn again to my mattēre.

This maid, of which I tell my tale express,
She kept herself, her needed no mistrēs;
For in her living maidens mightē read,
As in a book, ev'ry good word and deed
That longeth to a maiden virtuous;
She was so prudent and so bounteous.
For which the fame out sprang on every side
Both of her beauty and her bountē²⁰ wide:
That through the land they praised her each one
That loved virtue, save envý alone,
That sorry is of other mannē's weal,
And glad is of his sorrow and unheal.²¹
The Doctor maketh this descriptioun.²²
This maiden on a day went in the town
Toward a temple, with her mother dear,
As is of youngē maidens the mannēre.
Now was there then a justice in that town,
That governor was of that regioun:
And so befell, this judge his eyen cast
Upon this maid, avising²³ her full fast,
As she came forth by where this judgē stood;
Anon his heartē changed and his mood,
So was he caught with beauty of this maid
And to himself full privily he said,

1 Care.
2 Ask.
3 Glory.
4 Beams, rays.
5 Mind, spirit.
6 Moderation.
7 Utterance, speech; from Latin, "facundia," eloquence.
8 Diligent, eager.
9 Other readings are "thought" and "youth."
10 Of old.
11 Governesses, duennas.
12 Wickedness; French, "méchanceté."

13 Be slack, fail.
14 Forsaken, left.
15 Gluttony.
16 Wicked, evil.
17 Heed.
18 Oversight.
19 Pay for, suffer for.
20 Goodness.
21 Misfortune.
22 This line seems to be a kind of aside thrown in by Chaucer himself.
23 Observing.

"This maiden shall be mine for any man."
 Anon the fiend into his heartē ran,
 And taught him suddenly, that he by sleight
 This maiden to his purpose winnē might.
 For certes, by no force, nor by no meed,¹
 Him thought he was not able for to speed;
 For she was strong of friendēs, and eke she
 Confirmed was in such sov'reign bountē,
 That well he wist he might her never win,
 As for to make her with her body sin.
 For which, with great deliberatioun,
 He sent after a clerk² was in the town,
 The which he knew for subtle and for bold.
 This judge unto this clerk his talē told
 In secret wise, and made him to assure
 He shouldē tell it to no creatūre,
 And if he did, he shouldē lose his head.
 And when assented was this cursed rede,³
 Glad was the judge, and made him greatē cheer,
 And gave him giftēs precioūs and dear.

When shapen⁴ was all their conspiracy
 From point to point, how that his lechery
 Performed shouldē be full subtilly,
 As ye shall hear it after openly,
 Home went this clerk, that hightē Claudius.
 This falsē judge, that hightē Appius,—
 (So was his namē, for it is no fable,
 But known for a storial⁵ thing notāble;
 The sentence⁶ of it sooth⁷ is out of doubt);—
 This falsē judgē went now fast about
 To hasten his delight all that he may.
 And so befell, soon after on a day,
 This falsē judge, as telleth us the story,
 As he was wont, sat in his consistōry,
 And gave his doomēs⁸ upon sundry case';
 This falsē clerk came forth a full great pace,⁹
 And saidē; "Lord, if that it be your will,
 As do me right upon this piteous bill,¹⁰
 In which I plain upon Virginus.
 And if that he will say it is not thus,
 I will it prove, and findē good witness,
 That sooth is what my billē will express."
 The judge answer'd, "Of this, in his absēce,
 I may not give definitive sentence.
 Let do¹¹ him call, and I will gladly hear;
 Thou shalt have allē right, and no wrong here."

Virginus came to weet¹² the judgē's will,
 And right anon was read this cursed bill;
 The sentence of it was as ye shall hear:
 "To you, my lord, Sir Appius so dear,
 Sheweth your poorē servant Claudius,
 How that a knight called Virginus,
 Against the law, against all equity,
 Holdeth, express against the will of me,
 My servant, which that is my thrall¹³ by right,
 Which from my house was stolen on a night,
 While that she was full young; I will it prove¹⁴

¹ Bribe, reward.

² The various readings of this word are "churi," or "cheri," in the best manuscripts; "client" in the common editions; and "clerk," supported by two important manuscripts. "Olient" would perhaps be the best reading, if it were not awkward for the metre; but between "churi" and "clerk" there can be little doubt that Mr Wright chose wisely when he preferred the second.

⁴ Arranged.

⁶ Discourse, account.

³ Counsel, plot.

⁵ Historical, authentic.

⁷ True.

By witness, lord, so that it you not grieve;¹⁵
 She is his daughter not, what so he say.
 Wherefore to you, my lord the judge, I pray,
 Yield me my thrall, if that it be your will."
 Lo, this was all the sentence of the bill.
 Virginus gan upon the clerk behold;
 But hastily, ere he his talē told,
 And would have proved it, as should a knight,
 And eke by witness of many a wight,
 That all was false that said his adversary,
 This cursed¹⁶ judgē would no longer tarry,
 Nor hear a word more of Virginus,
 But gave his judgēment, and saidē thus:
 "I deem¹⁷ anon this clerk his servant have;
 Thou shalt no longer in thy house her save.
 Go, bring her forth, and put her in our ward;
 The clerk shall have his thrall: thus I award."

And when this worthy knight, Virginus,
 Through sentence of this justice Appius,
 Mustē by force his dearē daughter give
 Unto the judge, in lechery to live,
 He went him home, and sat him in his hall,
 And let anon his dearē daughter call;
 And with a facē dead as ashes cold
 Upon her humble face he gan behold,
 With father's pity sticking¹⁸ through his heart,
 All¹⁹ would he from his purpose not convert.²⁰
 "Daughter," quoth he, "Virginia by name,
 There be two wayēs, either death or shame,
 That thou must suffer,—alas that I was bore!
 For never thou deservedest wherefore
 To dien with a sword or with a knife.
 O dearē daughter, ender of my life,
 Whom I have foster'd up with such pleasānce
 That thou were ne'er out of my remembrance;
 O daughter, which that art my lastē woe,
 And in this life my lastē joy also,
 O gem of chastity, in patiēce
 Take thou thy death, for this is my sentēce:
 For love and not for hate thou must be dead;
 My piteous hand must smiten off thine head.
 Alas, that ever Appius thee say!²¹
 Thus hath he falsely judged thee to-day."
 And told her all the case, as ye before
 Have heard; it needeth not to tell it more.

"O mercy, dearē father," quoth the maid.
 And with that word she both her armēs laid
 About his neck, as she was wont to do,
 (The tearēs burst out of her eyen two),
 And said, "O goodē father, shall I die?
 Is there no grace? is there no remedy?"
 "No, certes, dearē daughter mine," quoth he.
 "Then give me leisure, father mine," quoth she,

"My death for to complain²² a little space:
 For, pardie, Jephthah gave his daughter grace
 For to complain, ere he her slew, alas!²³

⁸ Judgments.

⁹ In haste.

¹⁰ Petition.

¹¹ Cause.

¹² Know, learn.

¹³ Slave.

¹⁴ Prove.

¹⁵ Be not displeasing.

¹⁶ Villainous.

¹⁷ Pronounce, determine.

¹⁸ Piercing.

¹⁹ Although.

²⁰ Swerve, turn aside.

²¹ Saw.

²² Bewail.

²³ Judges xi. 37, 38. "And she said unto her father, Let . . . me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows. And he said, Go."

And, God it wot, nothing was her trespass,¹
 But for she ran her father first to see,
 To welcome him with great solemnity."
 And with that word she fell a-swoon anon;
 And after, when her swooning was y-gone,
 She rose up, and unto her father said:
 "Blessed be God, that I shall die a maid.
 Give me my death, ere that I have shame;
 Do with your child your will, in Goddē's name."
 And with that word she prayed him full oft
 That with his sword he would smite her soft;
 And with that word, a-swoon again she fell.
 Her father, with full sorrowful heart and fell,²
 Her head off smote, and by the top it hent,³
 And to the judge he went it to present,
 As he sat yet in doom⁴ in consistōry.

And when the judge it saw, as saith the story,
 He bade to take him, and to hang him fast.
 But right anon a thousand people in thrast⁵
 To save the knight, for ruth and for pity,
 For known was the false iniquity.
 The people anon had suspect⁶ in this thing,
 By manner of the clerk's challenging,
 That it was by th' assent of Appius;
 They wistē well that he was lecherous.
 For which unto this Appius they gon,
 And cast him in a prison right anon,
 Where as he slew himself: and Claudius,
 That servant was unto this Appius,
 Was doomed for to hang upon a tree;
 But that Virginus, of his pity,
 So prayed for him, that he was exil'd;
 And ellēs certes had he been beguil'd;⁷
 The remenant were hanged, more and less,
 That were consenting to this cursedness.⁸

Here men may see how sin hath his merite:⁹
 Beware, for no man knows how God will smite
 In no degree, nor in which manner wise
 The worm of consciēcē may arise
 Of¹⁰ wicked life, though it so privy be,
 That no man knows thereof, save God and he;
 For be he lewēd man or ellēs lear'd,¹¹
 He knows not how soon he shall be afear'd;
 Therefore I redē¹² you this counsel take,
 Forsakē sin, ere sinnē you forsake.

THE PARDONER'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.

OUR Hostē gan to swear as he were wood;¹³
 "Harow!" quoth he, "by nailēs and by blood,¹⁴

¹ Offence.² Stern, cruel.³ Took.⁴ Judgment.⁵ Thrust.⁶ Suspicion.

⁷ "Cast into gaol," according to Urry's explanation; though we should probably understand that, if Claudius had not been sent out of the country, his death would have been secretly contrived through private detestation.

⁸ Villainy.⁹ Desert.¹⁰ Cause a man to tremble because of.¹¹ Illiterate or learned.¹² Advise.¹³ Mad.

¹⁴ The nails and blood of Christ, by which it was then a fashion to swear.

¹⁵ Counsellors; those who aid their undertakings.¹⁶ Nevertheless.¹⁷ Innocent.¹⁸ Paid for, suffered for.¹⁹ Profit.²⁰ No matter.²¹ Body.²² See note 1, page 22.²³ Box; French, "boîte," old form "boiste."

This was a cursed thief, a false justice.
 As shameful death as heartē can devise
 Come to these judges and their advoca's.¹⁵
 Algate¹⁶ this sely¹⁷ maid is slain, alas!
 Alas! too dearē bought¹⁸ she her beauty.
 Wherefore I say, that all day man may see
 That giftēs of fortune and of nature
 Be cause of death to many a creature.
 Her beauty was her death, I dare well sayn;
 Alas! so piteously as she was slain.
 [Of bothē giftēs, that I speak of now,
 Men have full often morē harm than prow.¹⁹]
 But truēly, mine owen master dear,
 This was a piteous talē for to hear;
 But natheless, pass over; 'tis no force.²⁰
 I pray to God to save thy gentle corse,²¹
 And eke thine urinals, and thy jordans,
 Thine Hippocras, and eke thy Galliens,²²
 And every boist²³ full of thy lectuary,
 God bless them, and our lady Saintē Mary.
 So may I thé,²⁴ thou art a proper man,
 And like a prelate, by Saint Ronian;
 Said I not well? can I not speak in term?²⁵
 But well I wot, thou dost²⁶ mine heart to erme,²⁷
 That I have almost caught a cardiacle:²⁸
 By *corpus Domini*, but²⁹ I have triacle,³⁰
 Or else a draught of moist and corny³¹ ale,
 Or but³² I hear anon a merry tale,
 Mine heart is brost³³ for pity of this maid.
 Thou *bel ami*, thou Pardoner," he said,
 "Tell us some mirth of japēs³⁴ right anon."
 "It shall be done," quoth he, "by Saint Ronion.
 But first," quoth he, "here at this alē-stake³⁵
 I will both drink, and biten on a cake."
 But right anon the gentles gan to cry,
 "Nay, let him tell us of no ribaldry.
 Tell us some moral thing, that we may lear³⁶
 Some wit,³⁷ and thennē will we gladly hear."
 "I grant y-wis,"³⁸ quoth he; "but I must
 think
 Upon some honest thing while that I drink."

THE TALE.³⁹

Lordings (quoth he), in churchē when I preach,
 I painē me⁴⁰ to have an hautein⁴¹ speech,
 And ring it out, as round as doth a bell,
 For I know all by rotē that I tell.
 My theme is always one, and ever was;
*Radix malorum est cupiditas.*⁴²
 First I pronouncē whencē that I come,
 And then my bullēs shew I all and some;

²⁴ Thrive.²⁵ In set form.²⁶ Makest.²⁷ Grieve; from Anglo-Saxon, "earme," wretched.²⁸ Heartache; from Greek, καρδιαλγία.²⁹ Unless.³⁰ A remedy.

³¹ New and strong, nappy. As to "moist," see note 9, page 22.

³² Broken, burst.³³ Jokes.³⁴ Ale-house sign.³⁵ Learn.³⁶ Wisdom, sense.³⁷ Surely.

³⁸ The outline of this Tale is to be found in the "Cento Novelle Antiche," but the original is now lost. As in the case of the Wife of Bath's Tale, there is a long prologue, but in this case it has been treated as part of the Tale.

³⁹ Take pains, make an effort.⁴⁰ Loud, lofty; from French, "hautain."⁴¹ "The love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Tim. vi. 10).

Our liegē lordē's seal on my patēt,
 That shew I first, my body to warrent,¹
 That no man be so hardy, priest nor clerk,
 Me to disturb of Christē's holy werk.
 And after that then tell I forth my tales.
 Bullēs of popēs, and of cardinales,
 Of patriarchs, and of bishōps I shew,
 And in Latīn I speak a wordēs few,
 To savour with my predication,
 And for to stir men to devotion
 Then shew I forth my longē crystal stones,
 Y-crammed full of cloutēs² and of bones;
 Relics they be, as weenē they³ each one.
 Then have I in latoun⁴ a shoulder-bone
 Which that was of a holy Jewē's sheep.
 "Good men," say I, "take of my wordēs keep;⁵
 If that this bone be wash'd in any well,
 If cow, or calf, or sheep, or oxē swell,
 That any worm hath eat, or worm y-stung,
 Take water of that well, and wash his tongue,
 And it is whole anon; and farthermore
 Of pockēs, and of scab, and every sore
 Shall every sheep be whole, that of this well
 Drinketh a draught; take keep⁶ of that I tell.

"If that the goodman, that the beastēs oweth,⁶
 Will every week, ere that the cock him croweth,
 Fasting, y-drinken of this well a draught,
 As thilkē holy Jew our elders taught,
 His beastēs and his store shall multiply.
 And, Sirs, also it healeth jealousy;
 For though a man be fall'n in jealous rage,
 Let makē with this water his pottāge,
 And never shall he more his wife mistrust,⁷
 Though he the sooth of her defaultē wist;
 All⁸ had she taken priestēs two or three.
 Here is a mittain⁹ eke, that ye may see;
 He that his hand will put in this mittain,
 He shall have multiplying of his grain,
 When he hath sown, be it wheat or oats,
 So that he offer pence, or ellēs groats.
 And, men and women, one thing warn I you;
 If any wight be in this churchē now
 That hath done sin horrible, so that he
 Dare not for shame of it y-shriven¹⁰ be;
 Or any woman, be she young or old,
 That hath y-made her husband cokēwold,¹¹
 Such folk shall have no power nor no grace
 To offer to my relics in this place.
 And whoso findeth him out of such blame,
 He will come up and offer in God's name;
 And I assoil him by the authority
 Which that by bull y-granted was to me."

By this gaud¹² have I wonnē year by year
 A hundred marks, since I was pardonere.
 I standē like a clerk in my pulpit,
 And when the lewēd¹³ people down is set,
 I preachē so as ye have heard before,
 And tellē them a hundred japēs¹⁴ more.
 Then pain I me to stretchē forth my neck,

And east and west upon the people I beck,
 As doth a dovē, sitting on a bern;¹⁵
 My handēs and my tonguē go so yern,¹⁶
 That it is joy to see my business.
 Of avarice and of such cursedness¹⁷
 Is all my preaching, for to make them free
 To give their pence, and namely¹⁸ unto me.
 For mine intent is not but for to win,
 And nothing for correction of sin.
 I reckē never, when that they be buried,
 Though that their soulēs go a blackburied.¹⁹
 For certes many a predication
 Cometh oft-time of evil intention;²⁰
 Some for pleasānce of folk, and flattery,
 To be advanced by hypocrisy;
 And some for vainglory, and some for hate.
 For, when I dāre not otherwise debate,
 Then will I sting him with my tonguē smart²¹
 In preaching, so that he shall not astart²²
 To be defamed falsely, if that he
 Hath trespass'd²³ to my brethren or to me.
 For, though I tellē not his proper name,
 Men shall well knowē that it is the same
 By signēs, and by other circumstānces.
 Thus quite I²⁴ folk that do us displeasānces:
 Thus spit I out my venom, under hue
 Of holiness, to seem holy and true.
 But, shortly mine intent I will devise,
 I preach of nothing but of covetise.
 Therefore my theme is yet, and ever was,—
Radix malorum est cupiditas.

Thus can I preach against the samē vice
 Which that I use, and that is avarice.
 But though myself be guilty in that sin,
 Yet can I maken other folk to twin²⁵
 From avarice, and sorē them repent.
 But that is not my principal intent;
 I preachē nothing but for covetise.
 Of this mattēre it ought enough suffice.
 Then tell I them examples many a one,
 Of oldē stories longē timē gone;
 For lewēd²⁶ people lovē talēs old;
 Such thingēs can they well report and hold.
 What? trowē ye, that whilēs I may preach
 And winnē gold and silver for²⁷ I teach,
 That I will live in povert' wilfully?
 Nay, nay, I thought it never truely.
 For I will preach and beg in sundry lands;
 I will not do no labour with mine hands,
 Nor makē baskets for to live thereby,
 Because I will not beggen idly.
 I will none of the apostles counterfeit;²⁸
 I will have money, wool, and cheese, and wheat,
 All²⁹ were it given of the poorest page,
 Or of the poorest widow in a villāge:
 All³⁰ should her children stervē³¹ for famine.
 Nay, I will drink the liquor of the vine,
 And have a jolly wench in every town.
 But hearken, lordings, in conclusiōn;

probably a periphrastic and picturesque way of indicating damnation.

²⁰ Preaching is often inspired by evil motives.

²¹ Sharply.

²² Escape.

²³ Offended.

²⁴ Am I revenged on.

²⁵ Depart.

²⁶ Unlearned.

²⁷ Because.

²⁸ In respect of the poverty enjoined on and practised by them.

²⁹ Die.

¹ For the protection of my person.

² Rags, fragments.

³ As my auditors think.

⁴ Brass.

⁵ Heed.

⁶ Owneth.

⁷ Mistrust.

⁸ Although.

⁹ Glove, mitten.

¹⁰ Confessed.

¹¹ Cuckold.

¹² Jest, trick.

¹³ Ignorant.

¹⁴ Jest.

¹⁵ Barn.

¹⁶ Briskly.

¹⁷ Wickedness.

¹⁸ Especially.

¹⁹ The meaning of this is not very clear, but it is

Your liking is, that I shall tell a tale.
Now I have drunk a draught of corny ale,
By God, I hope I shall you tell a thing
That shall by reason be to your liking;
For though myself be a full vicious man,
A moral tale yet I you tellē can,
Which I am wont to preachē, for to win.
Now hold your peace, my tale I will begin.

In Flanders whilom was a company
Of youngē folkēs, that haunted folly,
As riot, hazard, stewēs, and taverns;
Where as with lutes, harpēs, and gitērnas,¹
They dance and play at dice both day and night,
And eat also, and drink over their might;
Through which they do the devil sacrifice
Within the devil's temple, in cursed wise,
By superfluity abominable.
Their oathēs be so great and so damnāble,
That it is grisly² for to hear them swear.
Our blissful Lordē's body they to-tear;³
Them thought the Jewēs rent him not enough;
And each of them at other's sinnē lough.⁴
And right anon in comē tombesteres⁵
Fetis⁶ and small, and youngē fruitesteres.⁷
Singers with harpēs, baudēs,⁸ waferers,⁹
Which be the very devil's officers,
To kindle and blow the fire of lechery,
That is annexed unto gluttony.
The Holy Writ take I to my witnēs,
That luxury is in wine and drunkenness.¹⁰
Lo, how that drunken Lot unkindly¹¹
Lay by his daughters two unwittingly,
So drunk he was he knew not what he wrought.
Heródes, who so well the stories sought,¹²
When he of wine replete was at his feast,
Right at his owen table gave his heat¹³
To slay the Baptist John full guiltēless.
Seneca saith a good word, doubtēless:
He saith he can no differencē find
Betwixt a man that is out of his mind,
And a man whichē that is drunkelew:¹⁴
But that woodnēs,¹⁵ y-fallen in a shrew,¹⁶
Persevereth longer than drunkenness.

O gluttony, full of all cursedness;
O causē first of our confusiōn,
Original of our damnatiōn,
Till Christ had bought us with his blood again!
Lookē, how dearē, shortly for to sayn,
Abought¹⁷ was first this cursed villainy:
Corrupt was all this world for gluttony.
Adam our father, and his wife also,

¹ Guitars.

² Dreadful; fitted to "agrise" or horrify the listener.

³ See note 18, page 42. Mr Wright says: "The common oaths in the Middle Ages were by the different parts of God's body; and the popular preachers represented that profane swearers tore Christ's body by their imprecations." The idea was doubtless borrowed from the passage in Hebrews (vi. 6), where apostates are said to "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame."

⁴ Laughed.

⁵ Female dancers or tumblers; from Anglo-Saxon, "tumban," to dance.

⁶ Dainty.

⁷ Fruit-girls.

⁸ Revellers.

⁹ Oake-sellers.

¹⁰ "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess" (Eph. v. 18).

¹¹ Unnaturally.

¹² The reference is probably to the diligent inquiries he made at the time of Christ's birth. See Matt. ii. 4-8.

¹³ Command.

From Paradise, to labour and to woe,
Were driven for that vice, it is no dread.¹⁸
For while that Adam fasted, as I read,
He was in Paradise; and when that he
Ate of the fruit defended¹⁹ of the tree,
Anon he was cast out to woe and pain.
O gluttony! well ought us on thee plain.
Oh! wist a man how many maladies
Follow of excess and of gluttonies,
He wouldē be the morē measurāble²⁰
Of his dietē, sitting at his table.
Alas! the shortē throat, the tender mouth,
Maketh that east and west, and north and south,
In earth, in air, in water, men do swink²¹
To get a glutton dainty meat and drink.
Of this mattēre, O Paul! well canst thou treat.
Meat unto womb, and womb eke unto meat,
Shall God destroyē both, as Paulus saith.²²
Alas! a foul thing is it, by my faith,
To say this word, and fouler is the deed,
When man so drinketh of the white and red,²³
That of his throat he maketh his privy
Through thilkē cursed superfluity.
The apostle saith,²⁴ weeping full piteously,
There walk many, of which you told have I,—
I say it now weeping with piteous voice,—
That they be enemies of Christē's crois;²⁵
Of which the end is death; womb is their God.
O womb, O belly, stinking is thy cod,²⁶
Full fill'd of dung and of corruptiōn;
At either end of thee foul is the soun'.
How great labour and cost is thee to find!²⁷
These cookēs how they stamp, and strain, and
grind,

And turnē substance into accident,
To fulfil all thy likerous talent!
Out of the hardē bonēs knockē they
The marrow, for they castē naught away
That may go through the gullet soft and swoot;²⁸
Of spicery and leaves, of bark and root,
Shall be his sauce y-maked by delight,
To make him have a newer appetite.
But, certes, he that haunteth such delices
Is dead while that he liveth in those vices.

A lecherous thing is wine, and drunkenness
Is full of striving and of wretchedness.
O drunken man! disfigur'd is thy face,²⁹
Sour is thy breath, foul art thou to embrace:
And through thy drunken nose sowneth the
soun',
As though thou saidest aye, Samsoūn! Samsoūn!
And yet, God wot, Samson drank never wine.

¹⁴ A drunkard. "Perhaps," says Tyrwhitt, "Chaucer refers to Epist. lxxxiii., 'Extende in plures dies illum ebril habitum; nunquid de furore dubitabis? nunc quoque non est minor sed brevior.'" ¹⁵ Madness.

¹⁶ One evil-tempered. ¹⁷ Atoned for. ¹⁸ Doubt.

¹⁹ Forbidden. St Jerome, in his book against Jovinian, says that so long as Adam fasted, he was in Paradise; he ate, and he was thrust out.

²⁰ Moderate. ²¹ Labour.

²² "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; but God shall destroy both it and them" (1 Cor. vi. 13).

²³ Wine. ²⁴ See Phil. iii. 18, 19.

²⁵ Cross; French, "croix."

²⁶ Bag; Anglo-Saxon, "codde;" hence peas-cod, pin-cod (pin-cushion), &c. ²⁷ Supply. ²⁸ Sweet.

²⁹ Compare with the lines which follow, the picture of the drunken messenger in the Man of Law's Tale, page 67.

Thou fallest as it were a sticked swine;
 Thy tongue is lost, and all thine honest cure;¹
 For drunkenness is very sepulture
 Of manne's wit and his discretión.
 In whom that drink hath dominatióu,
 He can no counsel keep, it is no dread.²
 Now keep you from the white and from the red,
 And namely³ from the whitē wine of Lepe,⁴
 That is to sell in Fish Street⁵ and in Cheap.
 This wine of Spaine creepeth subtilly
 In other winēs growing fastē by,
 Of which there riseth such fumosity,
 That when a man hath drunken draughtēs three,
 And weeneth that he be at home in Cheap,
 He is in Spain, right at the town of Lepe,
 Not at the Ráchelle, nor at Bourdeaux town;
 And thennē will he say, Samsón! Samsón!
 But hearken, lordings, one word, I you pray,
 That all the sov'reign actēs, dare I say,
 Of victories in the Old Testament,
 Through very God that is omnipotent,
 Were done in abstinence and in prayere:
 Look in the Bible, and there ye may it lear.⁶
 Look, Attila, the greatē conqueror,
 Died in his sleep,⁷ with shame and dishonour,
 Bleeding aye at his nose in drunkenness:
 A captain should aye live in soberness.
 And o'er all this, advise⁸ you right well
 What was commanded unto Lemuel;
 Not Samuel, but Lemuel, say I.
 Readē the Bible,⁹ and find it expressly
 Of wine giving to them that have justice.
 No more of this, for it may well suffice.

And, now that I have spoke of gluttony,
 Now will I you defendē hazardry.¹⁰
 Hazard is very mother of leasings,¹¹
 And of deceit, and cursed forswearings:
 Blasphem' of Christ, manslaughter, and waste
 also

Of chattel¹² and of time; and furthermo'
 It is reprove,¹³ and contrar' of honour,
 For to be held a common hazardour.
 And ever the higher he is of estate,
 The more he is holden desolate.¹⁴
 If that a princē wā hazardry,
 In allē governance and policy
 He is, as by common opinión,
 Y-hold the less in reputatióu.

Chilon, that was a wise ambassador,
 Was sent to Corinth with full great honour
 From Lacedæmon,¹⁵ to make alliaunce;
 And when he came, it happen'd him, by chance,
 That all the greatest that were of that land,

Y-playing attē hazard be them fand.
 For which, as soon as that it mightē be,
 He stole him home again to his countrý.
 And saidē there, "I will not lose my name,
 Nor will I take on me so great diffame,¹⁶
 You to ally unto no hazardors.¹⁷
 Sendē some other wise ambasadours,
 For, by my troth, me werē lever¹⁸ die,
 Than I should you to hazardors ally.
 For ye, that be so glorious in honours,
 Shall not ally you to no hazardours,
 As by my will, nor as by my treaty."
 This winē philosopher thus said he.
 Look eke how to the King Demetrius
 The King of Parthen, as the book smith us,
 Sent him a pair of dice of gold in scorn,
 For he had used hazard therebeforn:
 For which he held his glory and renown
 At no valēs or reputatióu.
 Lordēs may finden other manner play
 Honest enough to drive the day away.
 Now will I speak of oaths false and great
 A word or two, as oldē bookēs treat.
 Great swearing is a thing abominable,
 And false swearing is more reprovāble.
 The highē God forbade swearing at all;
 Witness on Matthew:¹⁹ but in special
 Of swearing with the holy Jeremie,²⁰
 Thou shalt swear sooth thine oaths, and not
 lie:

And swear in doom,²¹ and eke in righteousness;
 But idle swearing is a cursedness.²²
 Behold and see, there in the firstē table
 Of highē Goddē's bestēs²³ honourāble,
 How that the second best of him is this,
 Take not my name in idle²⁴ or amiss.
 Lo, rather²⁵ he forbiddeth such swearing,
 Than homicide, or many a cursed thing;
 I say that as by order thus it standeth;
 This knoweth he that his bests understandeth,
 How that the second best of God is that.
 And farthermore, I will thee tell all plat,²⁶
 That vengeance shall not partē from his house,
 That of his oaths is outrageous.
 "By Goddē's precious heart, and by his nails,²⁷
 And by the blood of Christ, that is in Hailes,²⁸
 Seven is my chance, and thine is cinque and
 trey:

By Goddē's armēs, if thou falsely play,
 This dagger shall throughout thine heartē ga."
 This fruit comes of the bicched²⁹ bonēs two,
 Forswearing, ire, falseness, and homicide.
 Now, for the love of Christ that for us died,

¹ Cure.² Doubt.³ Especially.⁴ A town near Cadiz, whence a stronger wine than the Gascon vineyard afforded was imported to England.⁵ Another reading is "Fleet Street."⁶ Learn.⁷ He was suffocated in the night by a hemorrhage, brought on by a debauch, when he was preparing a new invasion of Italy, in 453.⁸ Consider, bethink.⁹ Prov. xxxi. 4, 5: "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes strong drink; lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted."¹⁰ Forbid gaming.¹¹ Lies.¹² Property.¹³ Reproach.¹⁴ Undone, worthless.¹⁵ Most manuscripts, evidently in error, have "Sclon" and "Cahlon" for Chilon and Lacedæmon. Chilon was one of the seven sages of Greece, and

flourished about B.C. 500. According to Diogenes Laertius, he died, under the pressure of age and joy, in the arms of his son, who had just been crowned victor at the Olympic games.

¹⁶ Gamblers.¹⁷ Reproach.¹⁸ "Swear not at all;" Christ's words in Matt. v. 34.¹⁹ Jeremiah iv. 2.²⁰ Judgment.²¹ Wickedness.²² Commandments.²³ In vain.²⁴ Sooner.²⁵ Plainly.²⁶ The nails that fastened Christ on the cross, which were regarded with superstitious reverence.²⁷ An abbey in Gloucestershire, where, under the designation of "the blood of Hailes," a portion of Christ's blood was preserved.²⁸ A term of opprobrious reputation, applied to the dice.

Leavē your oathēs, bothē great and smale.
But, Sirs, now will I ell you forth my tale.

These riotourēs hree, of which I tell,
Long erst than¹ primē rang of any bell,
Were set them in a tavern for to drink;
And as they sat, they heard a bellē clink
Before a corpse, was carried to the grave.
That one of them gan callē to his knave,²
"Go bet,"³ quoth he, "and askē readily
What corpse is this, that passeth here forth by;
And look that thou report his namē well."
"Sir," quoth the boy, "it needeth never a deal;⁴
It was me told ere ye came here two hours;
He was, pardie, an old fellōw of yours,
And suddenly he was y-slain to-night;
Fordrunk⁵ as he sat on his bench upright,
There came a privy thief, men clepē Death,
That in this country all the people slay'th,
And with his spear he smote his heart in two,
And went his way withoutē wordēs mo'.
He hath a thousand slain this pestilence;
And, master, ere you come in his presēce,
Me thinketh that it were full necessary
For to beware of such an adversary;
Be ready for to meet him evermore.

Thus taughtē me my dame; I say no more."
"By Saintē Mary," said the tavernēre,
"The child saith sooth, for he hath slain this
year,
Hence ov'r a mile, within a great villāge,
Both man and woman, child, and hind, and
page;

I trow his habitation be there;
To be advised⁶ great wisdom it were,
Ere⁷ that he did a man a dishonour."
"Yea, Goddē's armēs," quoth this riotour,
"Is it such peril with him for to meet?
I shall him seek, by stile and eke by street.
I make a vow, by Goddē's dignē⁸ bonēs.
Hearken, fellōws, we three be allē ones:⁹
Let each of us hold up his hand to other,
And each of us become the other's brother,
And we will slay this falsē traitor Death;
He shall be slain, he that so many slay'th,
By Goddē's dignity, ere it be night."

Together have these three their trothē plight
To live and die each one of them for other
As though he were his owen boren¹⁰ brother.
And up they start, all drunken, in this rage,
And forth they go towārdēs that villāge
Of which the taverner had spoke beforē,
And many a grisly¹¹ oathē have they sworn,
And Christē's blessed body they to-rent;¹²
"Death shall be dead, if that we may him
hent."¹³

When they had gone not fully half a mile,
Right as they would have trodden o'er a stile,
An old man and a poorē with them met.
This oldē man full meekely them gret,¹⁴
And saidē thus; "Now, lordēs, God you see!"¹⁵
The proudest of these riotourēs three

¹ Before. ² Servant.
³ A hunting phrase; apparently its force is, "go beat up the game." ⁴ Whit. ⁵ Completely drunk.
⁶ Watchful, on one's guard. ⁷ Lest, in case.
⁸ Worthy. ⁹ At one.
¹⁰ Born; a better reading is "sworn." ¹¹ Dreadful.

Answer'd again; "What? churl, with sorry
grace,

Why art thou all forwrapped¹⁶ save thy face?
Why livest thou so long in so great age?"
This oldē man gan look on his visāge,
And saidē thus; "For that I cannot find
A man, though that I walked unto Ind,
Neither in city, nor in no villāge,
That wouldē change his youthē for mine age;
And therefore must I have mine agē still
As longē time as it is Goddē's will.
And Death, alas! he will not have my life.
Thus walk I like a restēless caitife,¹⁷
And on the ground, which is my mother's gate,
I knockē with my staff, early and late,
And say to her, 'Leve¹⁸ mother, let me in.
Lo, how I wanē, flesh, and blood, and skin;
Alas! when shall my bonēs be at rest?
Mother, with you I wouldē change my chest,
That in my chamber longē time hath be,
Yea, for an hairy clout to wrap in me.'¹⁹
But yet to me she will not do that grace,
For which full pale and welked²⁰ is my face.
But, Sirs, to you it is no courtesy
To speak unto an old man villainy,
But²¹ he trespass in word or else in deed.
In Holy Writ ye may yourselfēs read;
'Against²² an old man, hoar upon his head,
Ye should arisē: 'therefore I you rede,²³
Ne do unto an old man no harm now,
No morē than ye would a man did you
In age, if that ye may so long abide.
And God be with you, whether ye go or ride.
I must go thither as I have to go."

"Nay, oldē churl, by God thou shalt not so,"
Saidē this other hazardor anon;
"Thou partest not so lightly, by Saint John.
Thou spakest right now of that traitor Death,
That in this country all our friendēs slay'th;
Have here my troth, as thou art his espy;²⁴
Tell where he is, or thou shalt it abie,²⁵
By God and by the holy sacrament;
For soothly thou art one of his assent
To slay us youngē folk, thou falsē thief."
"Now, Sirs," quoth he, "if it be you so lief²⁶
To findē Death, turn up this crooked way,
For in that grove I left him, by my fay,
Under a tree, and there he will abide;
Nor for your boast he will him nothing hide.
See ye that oak? right there ye shall him find.
God savē you, that bought again mankind,
And you amend!" Thus said this oldē man;
And evereach of these riotourēs ran,
Till they came to the tree, and there they found
Of florins fine, of gold y-coined round,
Well nigh a seven bushels, as them thought.
No longer as then after Death they sought;
But each of them so glad was of the sight,
For that the florins were so fair and bright,
That down they sat them by the precious hoard.
The youngest of them spake the firstē word:

¹³ See note 3, page 135. ¹⁴ Catch.
¹⁵ Greeted. ¹⁶ Preserve, look upon graciously.
¹⁷ Closely wrapped up. ¹⁸ Miserable wretch.
¹⁹ Dear. ²⁰ To wrap myself in. ²¹ Withered.
²² Except. ²³ To meet. ²⁴ Advise.
²⁵ Spy. ²⁶ Suffer for. ²⁷ Desired a thing.

"Brethren," quoth he, "take keep what I shall say;
My wit is great, though that I bourde¹ and play.

This treasure hath Fortune unto us given
In mirth and jollity our life to liven;
And lightly as it comes, so will we spend.
Hey! Goddē's precious dignity! who wend²
To-day that we should have so fair a grace?
But might this gold be carried from this place
Home to my house, or ellēs unto yours
(For well I wot that all this gold is ours),
Then werē we in high felicity.
But truēly by day it may not be;
Men wouldē say that we were thievēs strong.
And for our owen treasure do us hong.³
This treasure mustē carried be by night,
As wisely and as alily as it might.
Wherefore I rede,⁴ that cut⁵ among us all
We draw, and let see where the cut will fall:
And he that hath the cut, with heartē blithe
Shall run unto the town, and that full swithe,⁶
And bring us bread and wine full privily:
And two of us shall keepē subtilly
This treasure well: and if he will not tarry,
When it is night, we will this treasure carry,
By one assent, where as us thinketh best."
Then one of them the cut brought in his fist,
And bade them draw, and look where it would
fall;

And it fell on the youngest of them all;
And forth toward the town he went anon.
And all so soon as that he was y-gone,
The one of them spake thus unto the other;
"Thou knowest well that thou art my sworn
brother,

Thy profit⁷ will I tell thee right anon.
Thou knowest well that our fellow is gone,
And here is gold, and that full great plenty,
That shall departed⁸ be among us three.
But natheless, if I could shape⁹ it so
That it departed were among us two,
Had I not done a friendē's turn to thee?"
Th' other answer'd, "I n'ot¹⁰ how that may be;
He knows well that the gold is with us tway.
What shall we do? what shall we to him say?"
"Shall it be counsel?"¹¹ said the firstē shrew;¹²
"And I shall tell to thee in wordēs few
What we shall do, and bring it well about."
"I grantē," quoth the other, "out of doubt,
That by my truth I will thee not bewray."
"Now," quoth the first, "thou know'st well we
be tway,

And two of us shall stronger be than one.
Look, when that he is set,¹³ thou right anon
Arise, as though thou wouldest with him play;
And I shall rive him through the sidēs tway,
While that thou strugglest with him as in game;

¹ Joke, frolic. ² Weened, thought.
³ Cause us to be hanged. ⁴ My advice is. ⁵ Lots. ⁶ Quickly.
⁷ What is for thine advantage. ⁸ Divided.
⁹ Contrive. ¹⁰ Know not.
¹¹ Secret, in confidence. ¹² Wicked wretch.
¹³ Set down. ¹⁴ Pleasures.
¹⁵ Agreed. ¹⁶ Two; German, "swel."
¹⁷ Leading such a (bad) life.
¹⁸ Kill, destroy, his rats.

And with thy dagger look thou do the same.
And then shall all this gold departed be,
My dearē friend, betwixtē thee and me:
Then may we both our lustēs¹⁴ all fulfil,
And play at dice right at our owen will."
And thus accorded¹⁵ be these shrewēs¹² tway
To slay the third, as ye have heard me say.

The youngest, which that wentē to the town,
Full oft in heart he rolled up and down
The beauty of these florins new and bright.
"O Lord!" quoth he, "if so were that I might
Have all this treasure to myself alone,
There is no man that lives under the throne
Of God, that shouldē live so merry as I."
And at the last the fiend our enemy
Put in his thought, that he should poison buy,
With which he mightē slay his fellows twy.¹⁶
For why, the fiend found him in such living,¹⁷
That he had leave to sorrow him to bring.
For this was utterly his full intent
To slay them both, and never to repent.
And forth he went, no longer would he tarry,
Into the town to an apothecary,
And prayed him that he him wouldē sell
Some poison, that he might his rattēs quell,¹⁸
And eke there was a polecat in his haw,¹⁹
That, as he said, his capons had y-slaw:²⁰
And fain he would him wreak,²¹ if that he might,
Of vermin that destroyed him by night.

Th' apothecary answer'd, "Thou shalt have
A thing, as wisely²² God my soulē save,
In all this world there is no creature
That eat or drank hath of this cōfecture,
Not but the mountance²³ of a corn of wheat,
That he shall not his life anon forlete;²⁴
Yea, starve²⁵ he shall, and that in leasē while
Than thou wilt go a pace²⁶ nought but a mile:
This poison is so strong and violent."
This cursed man hath in his hand y-hent²⁷
This poison in a box, and swift he ran
Into the nextē street, unto a man,
And borrow'd of him largē bottles three;
And in the two the poison poured he;
The third he keptē clean for his own drink,
For all the night he shope him²⁸ for to swink²⁹
In carrying off the gold out of that place.
And when this riotōr, with sorry grace,
Had fill'd with wine his greatē bottles three,
To his fellowēs again repaired he.

What needeth it thereof to sermon³⁰ more?
For, right as they had cast³¹ his death before,
Right so they have him slain, and that anon.
And when that this was done, thus spake the
one;

"Now let us sit and drink, and make us merry,
And afterward we will his body bury."
And with that word it happen'd him per cas³²
To take the bottle where the poison was,

¹⁹ Farm-yard, hedge. Compare the French, "haie."
²⁰ Slain. ²¹ Revenge. ²² Surely.
²³ Amount. ²⁴ Lay down, quit. ²⁵ Die.
²⁶ At a pace, quickly; so, on several occasions,
Chaucer speaks of "a furlong," or one or two furlongs,
when he means to denote a brief lapse of time. See
note 12, page 52, for an instance. ²⁷ Taken.
²⁸ Purposed. ²⁹ Labour.
³⁰ Talk, discourse. ³¹ Contrived, plotted.
³² By chance.

And drank, and gave his fellow drink also,
For which anon they sterved¹ both the two.
But certes I suppose that Avicen
Wrote never in no canon, nor no fen,²
More wondrous signēs of empoisoning,
Than had these wretches two ere their ending.
Thus ended be these homicidēs two,
And eke the false empoisoner also.
O cursed sin, full of all cursedness!
O trait'rous homicide! O wickedness!
O glutt'ny, luxury, and hazardry!
Thou blasphemmer of Christ with villainy,³
And oathēs great, of usage and of pride!
Alas! mankindē, how may it betide,
That to thy Creatōr, which that thee wrought,
And with his precious heartē-blood thee bought,
Thou art so false and so unkind,⁴ alas!

Now, good men, God forgive you your trespass,
And ware⁵ you from the sin of avarice.
Mine holy pardon may you all warice,⁶
So that ye offer nobles or sterlings,⁷
Or ellēs silver brooches, spoons, or rings.
Bowē your head under this holy bull.
Come up, ye wives, and offer of your will;
Your names I enter in my roll anon;
Into the bliss of heaven shall ye gon;
I you assoil⁸ by minē high powēre,
You that will offer, as clean and eke as clear
As ye were born. Lo, Sirēs, thus I preach;
And Jesus Christ, that is our soulēs' leech,⁹
So grantē you his pardon to receive;
For that is best, I will you not deceive.

But, Sirs, one word forgot I in my tale;
I have relics and pardon in my mail,
As fair as any man in Engleland,
Which were me given by the Popē's hand.
If any of you will of devotiōn
Offer, and have mine absolutiōn,
Come forth anon, and kneelē here adown,
And meekly receivē my pardoun.
Or ellēs takē pardon, as ye wend,¹⁰
All new and fresh at every townē's end,
So that ye offer, always new and new,
Nobles or pence which that be good and true.
Tis an honour to evereach that is here,
That ye have a suffisant pardonere
T' assoilē⁸ you in country as ye ride,
For aventūrēs which that may betide.
Paraventure there may fall one or two
Down of his horse, and break his neck in two.
Look, what a surety is it to you all,
That I am in your fellowship y-fall,
That may assoil you bothē more and lass,¹¹

¹ Died.

² Avicen, or Avicenna, was among the distinguished physicians of the Arabian school in the eleventh century, and very popular in the Middle Ages. His great work was called "Canon Medicinæ," and was divided into "fens," "fennes," or sections.

³ Outrage, impiety.

⁴ Unnatural.

⁵ Guard, keep.

⁶ "Warish," heal.

⁷ Sterling money.

⁸ Absolve. Compare the Scotch law-term "assailie," to acquit.

⁹ Physician of souls.

¹⁰ Go.

¹¹ Both great and small.

¹² Would counsel.

¹³ So thé ich—so may I thrive.

¹⁴ Saint Helen, according to Sir John Mandeville, found the cross of Christ deep below ground, under a rock, where the Jews had hidden it; and she tested

When that the soul shall from the body pass,
I redē¹² that our Hostē shall begin,
For he is most enveloped in sin.
Come forth, Sir Host, and offer first anon,
And thou shalt kiss the relics every one,
Yea, for a groat; unbuckle anon thy purse.

"Nay, nay," quoth he, "then have I Christē's curse!

Let be," quoth he, "it shall not be, so thé 'ch.¹³
Thou wouldest make me kiss thine oldē breech,
And swear it were a relic of a saint,
Though it were with thy fundament depaint'.
But, by the cross which that Saint Helen fand,¹⁴
I would I had thy coilons in mine hand,
Instead of relics, or of sanctuary.
Let cut them off, I will thee help them carry;
They shall be shrined in a hoggē's tord."
The Pardoner answered not one word;
So wroth he was, no wordē would he say.

"Now," quoth our Host, "I will no longer play

With thee, nor with none other angry man."
But right anon the worthy Knight began
(When that he saw that all the people lough¹⁵),
"No more of this, for it is right enough.
Sir Pardoner, be merry and glad of cheer;
And ye, Sir Host, that be to me so dear,
I pray you that ye kiss the Pardoner;
And, Pardoner, I pray thee draw thee ner,¹⁶
And as we diddē, let us laugh and play."
Anon they kiss'd, and rodē forth their way.

THE SHIPMAN'S TALE.¹⁷

THE PROLOGUE.

OUR Host upon his stirrups stood anon,
And saidē; "Good men, hearken every one,
This was a thrifty¹⁸ talē for the nones.
Sir Parish Priest," quoth he, "for Goddē's bones,
Tell us a tale, as was thy forword yore:¹⁹
I see well that ye learned men in lore
Can²⁰ muchē good, by Goddē's dignity."
The Parson him answér'd, "Ben'dicite!
What ails the man, so sinfully to swear?"
Our Host answér'd, "O Jankin, be ye there?
Now, good men," quoth our Host, "hearken to me.
I smell a Lollard²¹ in the wind," quoth he.

the genuineness of the sacred tree, by raising to life a dead man laid upon it. ¹⁵ Laughed. ¹⁶ Nearer.

¹⁷ In this Tale Chaucer seems to have followed an old French story, which also formed the groundwork of the first story in the eighth day of the "Decameron." The Prologue here given was transferred by Tyrwhitt from the place, preceding the Squire's Tale, which it had formerly occupied; the Shipman's Tale having no Prologue in the best manuscripts.

¹⁸ Discreet, profitable.

¹⁹ Thy promise formerly.

²⁰ Know, are capable of telling.

²¹ A contemptuous name for the followers of Wyckliffe; presumably derived from the Latin, "lollum," tares, as if they were the tares among the Lord's wheat; so, a few lines below, the Shipman intimates his fear lest the Parson should "spring cockle in our clean corn."

"Abide, for Goddē's dignē¹ passiōn,
For we shall have a prediciōn :
This Lollard here will preachen us somewhat."
"Nay, by my father's soul, that shall he not,
Saidē the Shipman ; "Here shall he not preach,
He shall no gospel glosē² here nor teach.
We all believe in the great God," quoth he.
"He wouldē sowē some difficultē,
Or springē cockle³ in our cleanē corn.
And therefore, Host, I warnē thee beforē,
My jolly body shall a talē tell,
And I shall clinkē you so merry a bell,
That I shall waken all this company ;
But it shall not be of philosophy,
Nor of physie, nor termēs quaint of law ;
There is but little Latin in my maw."⁴

THE TALE.

A Merchant whilom dwell'd at Saint Denise,
That richē was, for which men held him wise.
A wife he had of excellent beautē,
And companiable and revellous⁵ was she,
Which is a thing that causeth more dispence
Than worth is all the cheer and reverence
That men them do at feastēs and at dances.
Such salutatiōns and countenānces
Passen, as doth the shadow on the wall ;
But woe is him that payē must for all.
The sely⁶ husband algate⁷ he must pay,
He must us⁸ clothe and he must us array
All for his owen worship richēly :
In which array we dancē jollily.
And if that he may not, parāventure,
Or ellēs list not such dispence endure,
But thinketh it is wasted and y-lost,
Then must another payē for our cost,
Or lend us gold, and that is perilous.

This noble merchant held a noble house ;
For which he had all day so great repair,⁹
For his largesse, and for his wife was fair,
That wonder is ; but hearken to my tale.
Amongēs all these guestēs great and smale,
There was a monk, a fair man and a bold,
I trow a thirty winter he was old,
That ever-in-one¹⁰ was drawing to that place.
This youngē monk, that was so fair of face,
Acquainted was so with this goodē man,
Since that their firstē knowledgē began,
That in his house as familiār was he
As it is possible any friend to be.
And, for as muchel as this goodē man,
And eke this monk of which that I began,
Were both the two y-born in one villāge,
The monk him claimed, as for cousinage,¹¹

¹ Worthy.² Comment upon.³ Tares, weeds ; the "agrostemma githago" of Linnaeus ; perhaps named from the Anglo-Saxon, "ceocan," because it "chokes" the corn.⁴ Belly.⁵ Fond of society and merry-making.⁶ Simple.⁷ Always ; or, however.⁸ So in all the manuscripts ; and from this and the following lines it may be inferred that Chaucer had intended to put the Tale into the mouth of a female speaker.⁹ Resort of visitors.¹⁰ Constantly.¹¹ Claimed cousinship, kindred, with him.¹² A title bestowed on priests and scholars ; from "Dominus," like the Spanish, "Don."¹³ Especially.¹⁴ Liberal outlay.¹⁵ Afterwards.

And he again him said not oncē nay,
But was as glad thereof as fowl of day ;
For to his heart it was a great pleasānce.
Thus be they knit with etern' alliānce,
And each of them gan other to assure
Of brotherhood while that their life may dure.
Free was Dan¹² John, and namely¹³ of dispence,
As in that house, and full of diligence
To do pleasānce, and also great costāge ;¹⁴
He not forgot to give the leastē page
In all that house ; but, after their degree,
He gave the lord, and eithen¹⁵ his meinie,¹⁶
When that he came, some manner honest thing ;
For which they were as glad of his coming
As fowl is fain when that the sun upriseth.
No more of this as now, for it sufficeth.

But so befell, this merchant on a day
Shope¹⁷ him to makē ready his array
Toward the town of Bruges for to fare,
To buyē there a portiōn of ware ;¹⁸
For which he hath to Paris sent anon
A messenger, and prayed hath Dan John
That he should come to Saint Denis, and play¹⁹
With him, and with his wife, a day or tway,
Ere he to Bruges went, in allē wise.
This noble monk, of which I you devise,²⁰
Had of his abbot, as him list, licence,
(Because he was a man of high prudence,
And eke an officer out for to ride,
To see their granges and their barnēs wide²¹) ;
And unto Saint Denis he came anon.
Who was so welcome as my lord Dan John,
Our dearē cousin, full of courtesy ?
With him he brought a jub²² of malvesie,²³
And eke another full of fine vernage,²⁴
And volatile,²⁵ as aye was his usāge :
And thus I let them eat, and drink, and play.
This merchant and this monk, a day or tway.
The thirdē day the merchant up ariseth,
And on his needēs sadly him adviseth ;²⁶
And up into his countour-house²⁷ went he,
To reckon with himself as well may be,
Of thilkē²⁸ year, how that it with him stood,
And how that he dispended had his good,
And if that he increased were or non.
His bookēs and his baggēs many a one
He laid before him on his counting-board.
Full richē was his treasure and his hoard ;
For which full fast his countour door he shet ;
And eke he would that no man should him let²⁹
Of his accountēs, for the meanē time :
And thus he sat, till it was passed prime.

Dan John was risen in the morn also,
And in the garden walked to and fro,
And had his thingēs said full courteously.

¹⁶ Household, servants.¹⁷ Resolved, arranged.¹⁸ Merchandise. Bruges was in Chaucer's time the great emporium of European commerce.¹⁹ Enjoy himself.²⁰ Tell.²¹ To inspect and manage the rural property of the monastery.²² Jar.²³ Malvesie or Malmesey wine derived its name from Malvasia, a region of the Morea near Cape Malea, where it was made—as it also was on Chios and some other Greek islands. As to vernage, see note 21, p. 109.²⁴ Wild fowl, birds for the table ; French, "volaille," "volaille."²⁵ Seriously deliberated on his affairs.²⁶ Counting-house ; French, "comptoir."²⁷ That.²⁸ Detain from, hinder.

The good wife came walking full privily
 Into the garden, where he walked soft,
 And him saluted, as she had done oft ;
 A maiden child came in her company,
 Which as her list she might govérn and gle,¹
 For yet under the yardē² was the maid.
 "O dearē cousin mine, Dan John," she said,
 "What aileth you so rath³ for to arise?"
 "Niecē," quoth he, "it ought enough suffice
 Five hourēs for to sleep upon a night ;
 But⁴ it were for an old appalled⁵ wight,
 As be these wedded men, that lie and dare,⁶
 As in a formē sits a weary hare,
 Allē forstraught⁷ with houndēs great and
 smale ;

But, dearē niecē, why be ye so pale ?
 I trowē certes that our goodē man
 Hath you laboured, since this night began,
 That you were need to restē hastily."
 And with that word he laugh'd full merrily,
 And of his owen thought he wax'd all red.
 This fairē wife gan for to shake her head,
 And saidē thus ; "Yea, God wot all," quoth she.
 "Nay, cousin mine, it stands not so with me ;
 For by that God, that gave me soul and life,
 In all the realm of France is there no wife
 That lessē lust hath to that sorry play ;
 For I may sing alas and well-away !
 That I was born ; but to no wight," quoth she,
 "Dare I not tell how that it stands with me.
 Wherefore I think out of this land to wend,
 Or ellēs of myself to make an end,
 So full am I of dread and eke of care."

This monk began upon this wife to stare,
 And said, "Alas ! my niecē, God forbid
 That ye for any sorrow, or any dread,
 Fordo⁸ yourself : but tellē me your grief,
 Parāventure I may, in your mischief,⁹
 Counsel or help ; and therefore tellē me
 All your annoy, for it shall be secré.
 For on my portos¹⁰ here I make an oath,
 That never in my life, for lief nor loth,¹¹
 Ne shall I of no counsel you bewray."
 "The same again to you," quoth she, "I say.
 By God and by this portos I you swear,
 Though men me wouldeñ all in pieces tear,
 Ne shall I never, for¹² to go to hell,
 Bewray one word of thing that ye me tell,
 Not for no cousinage, nor alliañce,
 But verily for love and affiañce."¹³
 Thus be they sworn, and thereupon they kiss'd,
 And each of them told other what them list.
 "Cousin," quoth she, "if that I haddē space,
 As I have none, and namely¹⁴ in this place,
 Then would I tell a legend of my life,
 What I have suffer'd since I was a wife
 With mine husband, all¹⁵ be he your cousin.

"Nay," quoth this monk, "by God and Saint
 Martín,

He is no morē cousin unto me,
 Than is the leaf that hangeth on the tree ;
 I call him so, by Saint Denis of France,
 To have the morē cause of acquaintāñce
 Of you, which I have loved specially
 Aboven allē women sickerly,¹⁶
 This swear I you on my professioñ ;¹⁷
 Tell me your grief, lest that he come adown,
 And hasten you, and go away anon."

"My dearē love," quoth she, "O my Dan
 John,

Full lief¹⁸ were me this counsel for to hide,
 But out it must, I may no more abide.
 My husband is to me the worstē man
 That ever was since that the world began ;
 But since I am a wife, it sits¹⁹ not me
 To tellē no wight of our privity,
 Neither in bed, nor in none other place ;
 God shield²⁰ I shouldē tell it for his grace ;
 A wifē shall not say of her husband
 But all honoúr, as I can understand ;
 Save unto you thus much I tellē shall ;
 As help me God, he is nought worth at all,
 In no degree, the value of a fly.
 But yet me grieveth most his niggardý.²¹
 And well ye wot, that women naturally
 Desirē thingēs six, as well as I.
 They wouldē that their husbands shouldē be
 Hardy,²² and wise, and rich, and thereto free,
 And buxom²³ to his wife, and fresh in bed.
 But, by that ilkē²⁴ Lord that for us bled,
 For his honoúr myself for to array,
 On Sunday next I mustē needēs pay
 A hundred franca, or ellēs am I lorn.²⁵
 Yet were me lever²⁶ that I were unborn,
 Than me were done slander or villainý.
 And if mine husband eke might it espy,
 I were but lost ; and therefore I you pray,
 Lend me this sum, or ellēs must I dey.²⁷
 Dan John, I say, lend me these hundred francs ;
 Pardie, I will not failē you, my thanks,²⁸
 If that you list to do that I you pray ;
 For at a certain day I will you pay,
 And do to you what pleasance and service
 That I may do, right as you list devise.
 And but²⁹ I do, God take on me vengeance,
 As foul as e'er had Ganilion³⁰ of France."

This gentle monk answer'd in this mannere ;
 "Now truēly, mine owen lady dear,
 I have," quoth he, "on you so greatē ruth,³¹
 That I you swear, and plightē you my truth,
 That when your husband is to Flanders fare,³¹
 I will deliver you out of this care,
 For I will bringē you a hundred franca."
 And with that word he caught her by the flanks,

¹ Guide.
² Rod ; in pupillage ; a phrase properly used of children, but employed by the Clerk in the prologue to his tale. See note 4, page 93.

³ Early.
⁴ Unless.
⁵ Pallid, wasted.
⁶ Stare.
⁷ Distracted, confounded.
⁸ Ruin. ⁹ Distress.
¹⁰ Breviary.
¹¹ Willing or unwilling.
¹² Though the alternative should be.
¹³ Confidence, promise.
¹⁴ Especially.
¹⁵ Although.
¹⁶ Assuredly.

¹⁷ By my vows of religion.
¹⁸ Pleasant.
¹⁹ Becomes.
²⁰ Forbid.
²¹ Stinginess.
²² Brave.
²³ Yielding, obedient.
²⁴ Same.
²⁵ Ruined, undone.
²⁶ I would rather.
²⁷ Die.
²⁸ With my good-will ; if I can help it.
²⁹ Genelon, Ganelon, or Ganillon ; one of Charlemagne's officers, whose treachery was the cause of the disastrous defeat of the Christians by the Saracens at Roncevalles ; he was torn to pieces by four horses.
³⁰ Pity.
³¹ Gone.

And her embraced hard, and kiss'd her oft.
"Go now your way," quoth he, "all still and soft,

And let us dine as soon as that ye may,
For by my calendar 'tis prime of day;
Go now, and be as true as I shall be."
"Now ellës God forbiddë, Sir," quoth she;
And forth she went, as jolly as a pie,
And bade the cookës that they should them hie,¹
So that men mightë dine, and that anon.
Up to her husband is this wifë gone,
And knocked at his contour boldëly.
"Qui est la?"² quoth he. "Peter! it am I,"
Quoth she; "What, Sir, how longë will ye fast?

How longë time will ye reckon and cast
Your summës, and your bookës, and your things?

The devil have part of all such reckonings!
Ye have enough, pardie, of Goddë's sond.³
Come down to-day, and let your baggës stond.
Ne be ye not ashamed, that Dan John
Shall fasting all this day elengë⁴ gon?
What? let us hear a mass, and go we dine."
"Wife," quoth this man, "little canst thou divine

The curious businessë that we have;
For of us chapmen, all so God me save,
And by that lord that cleped is Saint Ive,
Scarcely amongës twenty, ten shall thrive
Continually, lasting unto our age.
We may well makë cheer and good visäge,
And drivë forth the world as it may be,
And keepen our estate in privity,
Till we be dead, or ellës that we play
A pilgrimage, or go out of the way.
And therefore have I great necessity
Upon this quaint⁵ world to advisë⁶ me.
For evermorë must we stand in dread
Of hap and fortune in our chapmanhead.⁷
To Flanders will I go to-morrow at day,
And come again as soon as e'er I may:
For which, my dearë wife, I thee beseech
As be to every wight buxom⁸ and meek,
And for to keep our good be curious,
And honestly governë well our house.
Thou hast enough, in every manner wise,
That to a thrifty household may suffice.
Thee lacketh none array, nor no vitail;
Of silver in thy purse thou shalt not fail."

And with that word his contour door he shet,⁹
And down he went; no longer would he let;¹⁰
And hastily a mass was therë said,
And speedily the tables werë laid,
And to the dinner fastë they them sped,
And richëly this monk the chapman fed.
And after dinner Dan John soberly
This chapman took apart, and privily
He said him thus: "Cousin, it standeth so,
That, well I see, to Bruges ye will go;

¹ Haste. ² Who is there? ³ Sending, gifts.
⁴ From French, "eloigner," to remove; it may mean either the lonely, cheerless condition of the priest, or the strange behaviour of the merchant in leaving him to himself. ⁵ Strange. ⁶ Consider.
⁷ Trading. ⁸ Civil, courteous. ⁹ Shut.
¹⁰ Hinder, delay. ¹¹ Moderately.

God and Saint Austin speedë you and guide.
I pray you, cousin, wisely that ye ride:
Governë you also of your diët
Attemperly,¹¹ and namely¹² in this heat.
Betwixt us two needeth no strangë fare;¹³
Farewell, cousin, God shieldë you from care.
If any thing there be, by day or night,
If it lie in my power and my might,
That ye me will command in any wise,
It shall be done, right as ye will devise.
But one thing ere ye go, if it may be;
I wouldë pray you for to lend to me
A hundred frankës, for a week or twy,
For certain beastës that I mustë buy,
To storë with¹⁴ a placë that is ours
(God help me so, I would that it were yours);
I shall not failë surely of my day,
Not for a thousand franca, a milë way.
But let this thing be secret, I you pray;
For yet to-night these beastës must I buy.
And fare now well, mine owen cousin dear;
*Grand mercy*¹⁵ of your oost and of your cheer."

This noble merchant gentilly¹⁶ anon
Answér'd and said, "O cousin mine, Dan John,
Now sickerly this is a small request:
My gold is yourës, when that it you lost,
And not only my gold, but my chaffare;¹⁷
Take what you list, God shieldë that ye spare.¹⁸
But one thing is, ye know it well enow
Of chapmen, that their money is their plough.
We may creancoë¹⁹ while we have a name,
But goldless for to be it is no game.
Pay it again when it lies in your ease;
After my might full fain would I you please."

These hundred frankës set he forth anon,
And privily he took them to Dan John;
No wight in all this world wist of this loan,
Saving the merchant and Dan John alone.
They drink, and speak, and roam a while, and play,

Till that Dan John rode unto his abbay.
The morrow came, and forth this merchant rideth

To Flanders-ward, his prentice well him guideth,
Till he came unto Bruges merrily.
Now went this merchant fast and busily
About his need, and buyed and creancoed;
He neither played at the dice, nor danced;
But as a merchant, shortly for to tell,
He led his life; and there I let him dwell.

The Sunday next²⁰ the merchant was y-gone,
To Saint Denis y-comen is Dan John,
With crown and beard all fresch and newly shave.
In all the house was not so little a knave,²¹
Nor no wight ellës, that was not full fain
For that my lord Dan John was come again.
And, shortly to the point right for to gon,
This fairë wife accorded with Dan John,
That for these hundred francs he should all night

¹² Particularly. ¹³ Ado, ceremony.
¹⁴ With which to store. ¹⁵ Great thanks.
¹⁶ Handsomely, like a gentleman.
¹⁷ Merchandise.
¹⁸ God forbid that you should take too little.
¹⁹ Obtain credit; French, "créance," credit.
²⁰ After. ²¹ Servant-boy.

Havē her in his armēs bolt upright;
And this accord performed was in deed.
In mirth all night a busy life they lead,
Till it was day, that Dan John went his way,
And bade the meinie¹ "Farewell; have good
day."

For none of them, nor no wight in the town,
Had of Dan John right no suspicioun;
And forth he rodē home to his abbay,
Or where him list; no more of him I say.

The merchant, when that ended was the fair,
To Saint Denis he gan for to repair,
And with his wife he madē feast and cheer,
And toldē her that chaffare² was so dear,
That needēs must he make a chevisance;³
For he was bound in a recognisance
To payē twenty thousand shields⁴ anon.
For which this merchant is to Paris gone,
To borrow of certain friendēs that he had
A certain francs, and some with him he lad.⁵
And when that he was come into the town,
For great chertē⁶ and great affectioun
Unto Dan John he wentē first to play;
Not for to borrow of him no monēy,
But for to weet⁷ and see of his welfare,
And for to tellē him of his chaffare,
As friendēs do, when they be met in fere.⁸
Dan John him madē feast and merry cheer;
And he him told again full specially,
How he had well y-bought and graciously
(Thanked be God) all whole his merchandise;
Save that he must, in allē manner wise,
Maken a chevisance, as for his best;
And then he shouldē be in joy and rest.
Dan John answered, "Certes, I am fain⁹
That ye in health be comē home again:
And if that I were rich, as have I bliss,
Of twenty thousand shields should ye not miss,
For ye so kindly the other day
Lentē me gold, and as I can and may
I thankē you, by God and by Saint Jame.
But natheless I took unto our Dame,
Your wife at home, the samē gold again,
Upon your bench; she wot it well, certāin,
By certain tokens that I can her tell.
Now, by your leave, I may no longer dwell;
Our abbot will out of this town anon,
And in his company I mustē gon.
Greet well our Dame, mine owen niecē sweet,
And farewell, dearē cousin, till we meet."

This merchant, which that was full ware and
wise,
Creanced hath, and paid eke in Paris
To certain Lombards ready in their hond
The sum of gold, and got of them his bond,
And home he went, merry as a popinjay.
For well he knew he stood in such array
That needēs must he win in that voyage¹⁰
A thousand francs, above all his costāge.¹¹
His wife full ready met him at the gate,

As she was wont of old usāge algate;¹²
And all that night in mirthē they beset;¹³
For he was rich, and clearly out of debt.
When it was day, the merchant gan embrace
His wife all new, and kiss'd her in her face,
And up he went, and maked it full tough.
"No more," quoth she, "by God ye have
enough;"

And wantonly again with him she play'd,
Till at the last this merchant to her said.
"By God," quoth he, "I am a little wroth
With you, my wife, although it be me loth;
And wot ye why? by God, as that I guess,
That ye have made a manner strangēness¹⁴
Betwixtē me and my cousin, Dan John.
Ye should have warned me, ere I had gone,
That he you had a hundred frankēs paid
By ready token; he held him evil apaid¹⁵
For that I to him spake of chevisance,¹⁶
(Me seemed so as by his countenance);
But natheless, by God of heaven king,
I thoughtē not to ask of him no thing.
I pray thee, wife, do thou no morē so.
Tell me alway, ere that I from thee go,
If any debtor hath in mine absēce
Y-payēd thee, lest through thy negligence
I might him ask a thing that he hath paid."

This wife was not afeared nor afraid,
But boldly she said, and that anon;
"Mary! I defy that falsē monk Dan John,
I keep¹⁷ not of his tokens never a deal:¹⁸
He took me certain gold, I wot it well.—
What? evil thedom¹⁹ on his monkē's snout!—
For, God it wot, I ween'd withoutē doubt
That he had given it me, because of you,
To do therewith mine honour and my prow,²⁰
For cousinage, and eke for bellē cheer
That he hath had full oftentimē here.
But since I see I stand in such disjoint,²¹
I will answer you shortly to the point.
Ye have more slackē debtors than am I;
For I will pay you well and readily,
From day to day, and if so be I fail,
I am your wife, score it upon my tail,
And I shall pay as soon as ever I may.
For, by my troth, I have on mine array,
And not in waste, bestow'd it every deal.
And, for I have bestowed it so well,
For your honour, for Goddē's sake I say,
As be not wroth, but let us laugh and play.
Ye shall my jolly body have to wed;²²
By God, I will not pay you but in bed;
Forgive it me, mine owen spousē dear;
Turn hitherward, and makē better cheer."

The merchant saw none other remedy;
And for to chide, it were but a folly,
Since that the thing might not amended be.
"Now, wife," he said, "and I forgive it
thee;
But by thy lifē be no more so large;²³

¹ Servants.² Merchandise.³ Raise money by means of a borrowing agreement; from French, "achever," to finish; the general meaning of the word is a bargain, an agreement.⁴ Crowns; French, "écu."⁵ Took.⁶ Love.⁷ Know.⁸ Company.⁹ Glad.¹⁰ By his journey to Bruges.¹¹ Expenses.¹² Always.¹³ Spent.¹⁴ A kind of estrangement, coolness.¹⁵ Was displeased.¹⁶ Borrowing.¹⁷ Care.¹⁸ Whit.¹⁹ Thriving, success; from the verb "thé," thrive.²⁰ Profit, advantage.²¹ Danger, awkward position.²² In pledge.²³ Liberal, lavish.

Keep better my good, this give I thee in charge."¹
Thus endeth now my tale; and God us send
Taling enough, unto our livis' end!

THE PRIORESS'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.

"WELL said, by *corpus Domini*," quoth our
Host;
"Now longe may'st thou sailē by the coast,
Thou gentle Master, gentle Marinēre.
God give the monk a thousand last quad year!¹
Aha! fellows, beware of such a jape.²
The monk put in the mannē's hood an ape,³
And in his wifē's eke, by Saint Austin.
Drawē no monkēs more into your inn.
But now pass over, and let us seek about,
Who shall now tellē first of all this rout
Another tale;" and with that word he said,
As courteously as it had been a maid;
"My Lady Prioresē, by your leave,
So that I wist I shouldē you not grieve,⁴
I wouldē deemē⁵ that ye tellē should
A talē next, if so were that ye would.
Now will ye vouchēsafe, my lady dear?"
"Gladly," quoth she; and said as ye shall hear.

THE TALE.⁶

O Lord our Lord! thy name how marvellous
Is in this largē world y-spread!⁷ (quoth she)
For not only thy laudē⁸ precious
Performed is by men of high degree,
But by the mouth of children thy bountē
Performed is, for on the breast sucking
Sometimēs showē they thy herying.⁹

Wherefore in laud, as I best can or may
Of thee, and of the whitē lily flow'r
Which that thee bare, and is a maid alway,
To tell a story I will do my labour;
Not that I may increasē her honoūr,
For she herselfen is honoūr and root
Of bountē,¹⁰ next her son, and soulēs' boot.¹¹

O mother maid, O maid and mother free!¹²
O bush unburnt, burning in Moses' sight,
That ravished'st down from the deity,

¹ Ever so much evil. "Last" means a load, "quad," bad (see note 21, page 59); and literally we may read "a thousand weight of bad years." The Italians use "mal anno" in the same sense.

² Trick.

³ To put an ape in one's hood, on one's head, is to befool or deceive him.

⁴ Offend.

⁵ Judge, decide.

⁶ Tales of the murder of children by Jews were frequent in the Middle Ages, being probably designed to keep up the bitter feeling of the Christians against the Jews. Not a few children were canonised on this account; and the scene of the misdeeds was laid anywhere and everywhere, so that Chaucer could be at no loss for material.

⁷ Psalms viii. 1, "Domine, dominus noster, quān admirabile est nomen tuum in universā terrā."

⁸ Praise.

Through thy humblous, the ghost that in thee
light;¹³

Of whose virtūe, when he thine heartē light,¹⁴
Conceived was the Father's sapience;
Help me to tell it to thy reverence.

Lady! thy bounty, thy magnificence,
Thy virtue, and thy great humility,
There may no tongue express in no science:
For sometimes, Lady! ere men pray to thee,
Thou go'st before, of thy benignity,
And gettest us the light, through thy prayere,
To guiden us unto thy son so dear.

My conning¹⁵ is so weak, O blissful queen,
For to declarē thy great worthiness,
That I not may the weight of it sustene;
But as a child of twelvemonth old, or less,
That can unnethēs¹⁶ any word express,
Right so fare I; and therefore, I you pray,
Guidē my song that I shall of you say.

There was in Asia, in a great city,
Amongst Christian folk, a Jewery,¹⁷
Sustained by a lord of that country,
For foul usure, and lucre of villainy,
Hateful to Christ, and to his company;
And through the street men mightē ride and
wend,¹⁸

For it was free, and open at each end.

A little school of Christian folk there stood
Down at the farther end, in which there were
Children an heap y-come of Christian blood,
That learned in that schoolē year by year
Such manner doctrine as men used there;
This is to say, to singen and to read,
As smallē children do in their childhead.

Among these children was a widow's son,
A little clergion,¹⁹ seven year of age,
That day by day to scholay was his won,²⁰
And eke also, whereso he saw th' imāge
Of Christē's mother, had he in usāge,
As him was taught, to kneel adown, and say
Ave Maria, as he went by the way.

Thus had this widow her little son y-taught
Our blissful Lady, Christē's mother dear,
To worahip aye, and he forgot it not;
For sely²¹ child will always soonē lear.²²
But aye when I remember on this mattēre,
Saint Nicholas²³ stands ever in my presence;
For he so young to Christ did reverence.

This little child his little book learning,
As he sat in the school at his primēre,

⁹ Glory. "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength" (Pa. viii. 2).

¹⁰ Goodness.

¹¹ Help.

¹² Bounteous.

¹³ The spirit that on thee alighted; the Holy Ghost through whose power Christ was conceived.

¹⁴ Lightened, gladdened.

¹⁵ Skill, ability.

¹⁶ Scarcely.

¹⁷ A quarter which the Jews were permitted to inhabit; the Old Jewry in London got its name in this way.

¹⁸ Go, walk.

¹⁹ A young clerk or scholar.

²⁰ To study, go to school, was his wont.

²¹ Simple, innocent.

²² Learn.

²³ Who, even in his swaddling clothes—so says the "Breviarium Romanum"—gave promise of extraordinary virtue and holiness; for, though he sucked freely on other days, on Wednesdays and Fridays he applied to the breast only once, and that not until the evening.

He *Alma redemptoris*¹ heardē sing,
As children learned their antiphonere;²
And as he durst, he drew him nere and nere,³
And hearken'd aye the wordēs and the note,
Till he the firstē verse knew all by rote.

Nought wist he what this Latin was to say,⁴
For he so young and tender was of age;
But on a day his fellow gan he pray
To expound him this song in his language,
Or tell him why this song was in usage:
This pray'd he him to construe and declare,
Full oftentime upon his kneēs bare.

His fellow, which that elder was than he,
Answer'd him thus: "This song, I have heard
say,

Was makēd of our blissful Lady free,
Her to salute, and ekē her to pray
To be our help and succour when we dey.⁵
I can no more expound in this mattēre:
I learnē song, I know but small grammēre."

"And is this song y-made in reverence
Of Christē's mother?" said this innocent;
Now certes I will do my diligence
To conne⁶ it all, ere Christēmas be went;
Though that I for my primer shall be shent,⁷
And shall be beaten thriēs in an hour,
I will it conne, our Lady to honoūr."

His fellow taught him homeward⁸ privily
From day to day, till he coud⁹ it by rote,
And then he sang it well and boldly
From word to word according with the note;
Twice in a day it passed through his throat;
To schoolē-ward, and homeward when he went;
On Christ's mother was set all his intent.

As I have said, throughout the Jewery,
This little child, as he came to and fro,
Full merrily then would he sing and cry,
O Alma redemptoris, evermo';
The sweetness hath his heartē pierced so
Of Christē's mother, that to her to pray
He cannot stint¹⁰ of singing by the way.

Our firstē foe, the serpent Satanas,
That hath in Jewēs' heart his waspē's nest,
Upwell'd and said, "O Hebrew people, alas!
Is this to you a thing that is honēt,¹¹
That such a boy shall walken as him lest
In your despite, and sing of such sentēce,
Which is against your lawē's reverence?"

From thencēforth the Jewēs have conspired
This innocent out of the world to chase;
A homicidē thereto have they hired,
That in an alley had a privy place,
And, as the child gan forth by for to pace,
This cursed Jew him hent,¹² and held him fast,
And cut his throat, and in a pit him cast.

I say that in a wardrobe¹³ they him threw,
Where as the Jewēs purged their entrail.
O cursed folk! O Herodēs all new!

¹ "O Alma Redemptoris Mater;" the beginning of a hymn to the Virgin.

² Book of anthems, or psalms, chanted in the choir by alternate verses.

³ Die.

⁴ Nearer.

⁵ Meant.

⁶ Disgraced.

⁷ Learn; con.

⁸ On the way home.

⁹ Knew.

¹⁰ Cease.

¹¹ Creditable, becoming.

¹² Seized.

What may your evil intentē you avail?
Murder will out, certāin it will not fail,
And namely¹⁴ where th' honoūr of God shall
spread;

The blood out crieth on your cursed deed.

O martyr soulded¹⁵ to virginity,
Now may'st thou sing, and follow ever-in-one¹⁶
The whitē Lamb celestial (quoth she),
Of which the great Evangelist Saint John
In Patmos wrote, which saith that they that
gon

Before this Lamb, and sing a song all new,
That never fleshly woman they ne knew.¹⁷

This poorē widow waited all that night
After her little child, but he came not;
For which, as soon as it was dayē's light,
With facē pale, in dread and busy thought,
She hath at school and ellēswhere him sought,
Till finally she gan so far espy,
That he was last seen in the Jewery.

With mother's pity in her breast enclosed,
She went, as she were half out of her mind,
To every placē, where she hath supposed
By likelihood her little child to find:
And ever on Christ's mother meek and kind
She cried, and at the lastē thus she wrought,
Among the cursed Jewēs she him sought.

She freined,¹⁸ and she prayed piteously
To every Jew that dwelled in that place,
To tell her, if her childē went thereby;
They saidē, "Nay;" but Jesus of his grace
Gave in her thought, within a little space,
That in that place after her son she cried,
Where he was cast into a pit beaide.

O greatē God, that pēformest thy laud
By mouth of innocents, lo here thy might!
This gem of chastity, this emeraud,¹⁹
And eke of martyrdom the ruby bright,
Where he with throat y-carven²⁰ lay upright,
He *Alma redemptoris* gan to sing
So loud, that all the place began to ring.

The Christian folk, that through the streetē
went,

In camē, for to wonder on this thing:
And hastily they for the provost sent.
He came anon withoutē tarrying,
And heried²¹ Christ, that is of heaven king,
And eke his mother, honour of mankind;
And after that the Jewēs let²² he bind.

With torment, and with shameful death each
one

The provost did²³ these Jewēs for to sterve²⁴
That of this murder wist, and that anon;
He wouldē no such cursedness observe;²⁴
Evil shall have, that evil will deserve;
Therefore with horses wild he did them draw,
And after that he hung them by the law.

The child, with piteous lamentation,

¹³ French, "garderobe," a privy.

¹⁴ Especially.

¹⁵ Confirmed; from French, "soulde;" Latin, "solidatus."

¹⁶ Continually. ¹⁷ See Revelations xiv. 3, 4.

¹⁸ Asked, inquired; from Anglo-Saxon, "frinan," "fragnian." Compare German, "fragen."

¹⁹ Emerald.

²⁰ Cut.

²¹ Praised.

²² Caused.

²³ Die.

²⁴ Countenance, overlook.

Was taken up, singing his song alway :
And with honour and great procession,
They carry him unto the next abbay.
His mother swooning by the bierē lay ;
Unnethē¹ might the people that were there
This newē Rachel bringē from his bier.

Upon his bierē lay this innocent
Before the altar while the massē last² ;
And, after that, th' abbōt with his convent
Have sped them for to bury him full fast ;
And when they holy water on him cast,
Yet spake this child, when sprinkled was the
water,

And sang, *O Alma redemptoris mater* !

This abbot, whish that was a holy man,
As monkēs be, or ellēs ought to be,
This youngē child to conjure he began,
And said ; " O dearē child ! I hale³ thee,
In virtue of the holy Trinity ;
Tell me what is thy causē for to sing,
Since that thy throat is cut, to my seeming."

" My throat is cut unto my neckē-bone,"
Saidē this child, " and, as by way of kind,⁴
I should have diēd, yea long time ago ;
But Jesus Christ, as ye in bookēs find,
Will that his glory last and be in mind ;
And, for the worahip⁵ of his mother dear,
Yet may I sing *O Alma* loud and clear.

" This well⁶ of mercy, Christē's mother sweet,
I loved alway, after my conning :⁷
And when that I my lifē should forlete,⁸
To me she came, and bade me for to sing
This anthem verily in my dying,
As ye have heard ; and, when that I had sung,
Me thought she laid a grain upon my tongue.

" Wherefore I sing, and sing I must certāin,
In honour of that blissful maiden free,
Till from my tongue off taken is the grain.
And after that thus saidē she to me ;
' My little child, then will I fetchē thee,
When that the grain is from thy tonguē take :
Be not aghast,⁹ I will thee not forsake."

This holy monk, this abbot him mean I,
His tongue out caught, and took away the grain ;
And he gave up the ghost full softly.
And when this abbot had this wonder seen,
His saltē tearē trickled down as rain :
And groff¹⁰ he fell all flat upon the ground,
And still he lay, as he had been y-bound.

The convent¹¹ lay eke on the pavēment
Weeping, and berying¹² Christ's mother dear.

¹ Scarcely.

² Lasted.

³ Embrace or salute ; implore ; from Anglo-Saxon,
" hale," the neck.

⁴ In course of nature.

⁵ Glory.

⁶ Fountain.

⁷ Knowledge.

⁸ Leave.

⁹ Afraid.

¹⁰ Prostrate. See note 3, page 27.

¹¹ The monks that composed the convent. See note
23, page 92.

¹² Praising.

¹³ Grant ; lend.

¹⁴ A boy said to have been slain by the Jews at Lin-
coln in 1255, according to Matthew Paris. Many
popular ballads were made about the event, which the
diligence of the Church doubtless kept fresh in mind
at Chaucer's day.

¹⁵ Merciful.

¹⁶ This Prologue is interesting, for the picture which
it gives of Chaucer himself ; riding apart from and
indifferent to the rest of the pilgrims, with eyes fixed
on the ground, and an " elvish," morose, or rather

And after that they rose, and forth they went,
And took away this martyr from his bier,
And in a tomb of marble stonēs clear
Enclosed they his little body sweet ;
Where he is now, God lene¹³ us for to meet.

O youngē Hugh of Lincoln !¹⁴ slain also
With cursed Jewēs,—as it is notāble,
For it is but a little while ago,—
Pray eke for us, we sinful folk unstable,
That, of his mercy, God so merciāble¹⁵
On us his greatē mercy multiply,
For reverence of his mother Mary.

CHAUCER'S TALE OF SIR THOPAS.

THE PROLOGUE.¹⁶

WHEN said was this mirācle, every man
As sober¹⁷ was, that wonder was to see,
Till that our Host to jape¹⁸ he began,
And then at erst¹⁹ he looked upon me,
And saidē thus ; " What man art thou ?"
quoth he ;

" Thou lookest as thou wouldest find an hare,
For ever on the ground I see thee stare.

" Approachē near, and look up merrily.
Now ware you, Sire, and let this man have
place.

He in the waist is shapen as well as I ;²⁰
This were a puppet in an arm t' embrace
For any woman small and fair of face.
He seemeth elviah²¹ by his countenance,
For unto no wight doth he dalliance.

" Say now somewhat, since other folk have
said ;

Tell us a tale of mirth, and that anon."

" Hostē," quoth I, " be not evil apaid,²²

For other talē certes can²³ I none,
But of a rhyme I learned yore²⁴ ago."

" Yea, that is good," quoth he ; " now shall
we hear

Some dainty thing, me thinketh by thy cheer."²⁵

THE TALE.²⁶

Listen, lordings, in good intent,
And I will tell you verament²⁷

Of mirth and of solas,²⁸

All of a knight was fair and gent,²⁹

self-absorbed air ; portly, if not actually stout, in body ;
and evidently a man out of the common, as the closing
words of the Host imply.

¹⁷ Serious.

¹⁸ Talk lightly.

¹⁹ For the first time.

²⁰ Referring to the poet's corpulency.

²¹ Surly, morose.

²² Dissatisfied.

²³ Know.

²⁴ Long.

²⁵ Expression, mien.

²⁶ " The Rhyme of Sir Thopas," as it is generally
called, is introduced by Chaucer as a satire on the dull,
pompous, and prolix metrical romances then in vogue.
It is full of phrases taken from the popular rhymesters
in the vein which he holds up to ridicule ; if, indeed—
though of that there is no evidence—it be not actually
part of an old romance which Chaucer selected and
reproduced to point his assault on the prevailing taste
in literature.

²⁷ Truly.

²⁸ Delight, solace.

²⁹ Gentle.

In battle and in tournament,
 His name was Sir Thopas.
 Y-born he was in far country,
 In Flanders, all beyond the sea,
 At Popering¹ in the place;
 His father was a man full free,
 And lord he was of that country,
 As it was Goddē's grace.
 Sir Thopas was a doughty swain,
 White was his face as paindemain,²
 His lippēs red as rose.
 His rode³ is like scarlēt in grain,
 And I you tell in good certāin
 He had a seemly nose.
 His hair, his beard, was like saffroūn,
 That to his girdle reach'd adown,
 His shoes of cordēwane;⁴
 Of Bruges were his hosen brown;
 His robē was of ciclatoun,⁵
 That costē many a jane.⁶
 He couldē hunt at the wild deer,
 And ride on hawking for rivēre⁷
 With gray goshawk on hand:
 Thereto he was a good archēre,
 Of wrestling was there none his peer,
 Where any ram⁸ should stand.
 Full many a maiden bright in bow'r
 They mourned for him *par amour*,
 When them were better sleep;
 But he was chaste, and no lechoūr,
 And sweet as is the bramble flow'r
 That beareth the red heep.⁹
 And so it fell upon a day,
 For sooth as I you tellē may,
 Sir Thopas would out ride;
 He worth¹⁰ upon his steedē gray,
 And in his hand a launcēgay,¹¹
 A long sword by his side.
 He pricked through a fair forēst,
 Wherein is many a wildē beast,
 Yea, bothē buck and hare;
 And as he pricked north and east,
 I tell it you, him had almeist
 Betid¹² a sorry care.
 There sprangē herbēs great and small,
 The liquorice and the setēwall,¹³
 And many a clove-gilofre,¹⁴
 And nutēmeg to put in ale,
 Whether it be moist¹⁵ or stale,
 Or for to lay in coffer.
 The birdēs sang, it is no nay,
 The sperhawk¹⁶ and the popinjay,

That joy it was to hear;
 The throstle-cock made eke his lay,
 The woodē-dove upon the spray
 She sang full loud and clear.
 Sir Thopas fell in love-longing
 All when he heard the throstle sing,
 And prick'd as he were wood;¹⁷
 His fairē steed in his pricking
 So sweated, that men might him wring,
 His sidēs were all blood.
 Sir Thopas eke so weary was
 For pricking on the softē grass,
 So fierce was his corāge,¹⁸
 That down he laid him in that place,
 To makē his steed some solace,
 And gave him good forāge.
 "Ah, Saint Marȳ, *ben'dicite*,
 What aileth thilkē¹⁹ love at me
 To bindē me so sore?
 Me dreamed all this night, pardie,
 An elf-queen shall my leman²⁰ be,
 And sleep under my gore.²¹
 An elf-queen will I love, y-wis,²²
 For in this world no woman is
 Worthy to be my make
 In town;
 All other women I forsake,
 And to an elf-queen I me take
 By dale and eke by down."
 Into his saddle he clomb anon,
 And pricked over stile and stone
 An elf-queen for to spy,
 Till he so long had ridden and gone,
 That he found in a privy wonne²³
 The country of Faery,
 So wild;
 For in that country was there none
 That to him durstē ride or gon,
 Neither wife nor child.
 Till that there came a great giaunt,
 His namē was Sir Oliphaunt,²⁴
 A perilous man of deed;
 He saidē, "Child,²⁵ by Termagaunt,²⁶
 But if²⁷ thou prick out of mine haunt,
 Anon I slay thy steed
 With mace.
 Here is the Queen of Faery,
 With harp, and pipe, and symphony,
 Dwelling in this place."
 The Child said, "All so may I thé,²⁸
 To-morrow will I meetē thee,
 When I have mine armōr;

¹ Poppering, or Poppeling, a parish in the marches of Calais, of which the famous antiquary Leland was once Rector.

² Either "pain de matin," morning bread; or "pain de Maine," because it was made best in that province; a kind of fine white bread.

³ Or "rudde;" complexion.

⁴ Cordovan; fine Spanish leather, so called from the name of the city where it was prepared.

⁵ A rich Oriental stuff of silk and gold, of which was made the circular robe of state called a "ciclaton," from the Latin, "cyclas." The word is French.

⁶ A Genoese coin, of small value; in our old statutes called "gallihalspens," or galley half-pence.

⁷ For river-fowl. See note 17, page 79.

⁸ The usual prize of wrestling contests. See note 8, page 22.

⁹ Fruit of the dog-rose, hip.

¹⁰ Mounted.

¹¹ Spear; "azagay" is the name of a Moorish weapon, and the identity of termination is singular.

¹² Befallen.

¹³ Valerian.

¹⁴ Clove-gilliflower; "caryophyllus hortensis."

¹⁵ New. See note 9, page 22.

¹⁶ Sparrowhawk.

¹⁷ Mad.

¹⁸ Inclination, spirit.

¹⁹ This.

²⁰ Mistress.

²¹ Shirt, garment.

²² Assuredly.

²³ Haunt.

²⁴ Literally, "Sir Elephant;" Sir John Mandeville calls those animals "Olyfautes."

²⁵ Young man.

²⁶ A pagan or Saracen deity, otherwise named Ter-vagan, and often mentioned in Middle Age literature. His name has passed into our language, to denote a ranter or blusterer, as he was represented to be.

²⁷ Unless.

²⁸ Thrive.

And yet I hopē, *par ma fay*,
 That thou shalt with this launcēgay
 Abyen¹ it full sore ;
 Thy maw²
 Shall I pierce, if I may,
 Ere it be fully prime of day,
 For here thou shalt be slaw.³
 Sir Thopas drew aback full fast ;
 This giant at him stonēs cast
 Out of a fell staff sling:
 But fair escaped Child Thopas,
 And all it was through Goddē's grace,
 And through his fair bearing.
 Yet listen, lordings, to my tale,
 Merrier than the nightingale,
 For now I will you rown,⁴
 How Sir Thopas, with aidēs smale,
 Pricking over hill and dale,
 Is come again to town.
 His merry men commanded he
 To makē him both game and glee ;
 For needēs must he fight
 With a giānt with headēs three,
 For paramour and jollity
 Of one that shone full bright.
 "Do⁵ come," he saidē, "my minstrāles
 And gestours⁶ for to tellē tales
 Anon in mine armīng,
 Of rōmances that be royāls,⁷
 Of popēs and of cardinals,
 And eke of love-longīng."
 They fetch'd him first the sweetē wine,
 And mead eke in a maseline,⁸
 And royal spicery ;
 Of ginger-bread that was full fine,
 And liquorice and eke cumin,
 With sugar that is trie.⁹
 He diddē,¹⁰ next his whitē lere,¹¹
 Of cloth of lakē¹² fine and clear,
 A breech and eke a shirt ;
 And next his shirt an haketon,¹³
 And over that an habergeon,¹⁴
 For piercing of his heart ;
 And over that a fine hauberk,¹⁵
 Was all y-wrought of Jewēs'¹⁶ werk,
 Full strong it was of plate ;
 And over that his coat-armour,¹⁷
 As white as is the lily flow'r,
 In which he would debate.¹⁸
 His shield was all of gold so red,

¹ Suffer for. ² Belly. -
³ Slain. ⁴ Whisper. ⁵ Cause.
⁶ Tellers of tales of adventure and chivalry.
⁷ So called because they related to Charlemagne and his family. ⁸ Drinking-bowl of maple.
⁹ Tried, refined. ¹⁰ Put on, donned.
¹¹ Skin. ¹² Fine lawn. ¹³ Cassock.
¹⁴ Sleeves and gorget of mail. ¹⁵ Plate-armour.
¹⁶ Magicians'. ¹⁷ Knight's surcoat. ¹⁸ Fight.
¹⁹ Carbuncle; French, "escarboucle;" a heraldic device.
²⁰ Boots; from French, "jambe," the leg.
²¹ "Cuir bouilli," French, boiled or prepared leather; also used to cover shields, &c.
²² Brass, or latten.
²³ No satisfactory explanation has been furnished of this word, used to describe some material from which rich saddles were made.

And therein was a boarē's head,
 A charbuncle¹⁹ beside ;
 And there he swore on ale and bread,
 How that the giant should be dead,
 Betide whatso betide.
 His jambeaux²⁰ were of cuirbouly,²¹
 His swordē's sheath of ivory,
 His helm of latoun²² bright,
 His saddle was of rewel²³ bone,
 His bridle as the sunnē shone,
 Or as the moonēlight.
 His spearē was of fine cypress,
 That bodeth war, and nothing peace ;
 The head full sharp y-ground.
 His steedē was all dapple gray,
 It went an amble in the way
 Full softēly and round
 In land.
 Lo, Lordēs mine, here is a fytt ;²⁴
 If ye will any more of it,
 To tell it will I fand.²⁵

Now hold your mouth for charity,
 Bothē knight and lady free,
 And hearken to my spell ;²⁶
 Of battle and of chivalry,
 Of ladies' love and druerie,²⁷
 Anon I will you tell.
 Men speak of rōmances of price²⁸
 Of Horn Child, and of Ipotis,
 Of Bevis, and Sir Guy,²⁹
 Of Sir Libeux,³⁰ and Pleindamour,
 But Sir Thopas, he bears the flow'r
 Of royal chivalry.
 His goodē steed he all bestrode,
 And forth upon his way he glode,³¹
 As sparkle out of brand ;³²
 Upon his crest he bare a tow'r,
 And therein stick'd a lily flow'r ;
 God shield his corse from shand !³³
 And, for he was a knight aantroūs,³⁴
 He wouldē sleepen in none house,
 But ligen³⁵ in his hood,
 His brightē helm was his wangér,³⁶
 And by him baited his destrér³⁷
 Of herbēs fine and good.
 Himself drank water of the well,
 As did the knight Sir Percival,³⁸
 So worthy under weed ;
 Till on a day —

²⁴ Division of a metrical romance. ²⁵ Try.
²⁶ Tale, discourse; from Anglo-Saxon, "spellian," to declare, tell a story.
²⁷ Gallantry. ²⁸ Worth, esteem.
²⁹ Sir Bevis of Hampton, and Sir Guy of Warwick, two knights of great renown.
³⁰ One of Arthur's knights, called "Ly bean desco-nus," "the fair unknown."
³¹ Glowed, shone, as he rode. ³² Torch.
³³ Harm. ³⁴ Adventurous. ³⁵ Lie.
³⁶ Pillow; from Anglo-Saxon, "wangere," because the "wanges;" or cheeks, rested on it.
³⁷ "Destrier," French, a war-horse; in Latin, "dextrarius," as if led by the right hand.
³⁸ Sir Percival de Galis, whose adventures were written in more than 60,000 verses by Chrétien de Troves, one of the oldest and best French romancers, in 1191.

CHAUCER'S TALE OF MELIBŒUS.

THE PROLOGUE.

"No more of this, for Goddē's dignity!"
 Quoth ourē Hostē; "for thou makest me
 So weary of thy very lewēdness,¹
 That, all so wisly² God my soulē bless,
 Mine earē achē for thy drafty³ speech.
 Now such a rhyme the devil I betechē:⁴
 This may well be rhyme doggerel," quoth he.
 "Why so?" quoth I; "why wilt thou lettē⁵ me
 More of my tale than any other man,
 Since that it is the best rhyme that I can?"
 "By God!" quoth he, "for, plainly at one word,
 Thy drafty rhyming is not worth a tord:
 Thou dost naught ellēs but dispendest⁶ time.
 Sir, at one word, thou shalt no longer rhyme.
 Let'see whe'er⁷ thou canst tellen aught in gest,⁸
 Or tell in prose somewhat, at the least,
 In which there be some mirth or some doctrine."⁹
 "Gladly," quoth I, "by Goddē's sweetē pine,¹⁰
 I will you tell a little thing in prose,
 That oughtē likē you,¹¹ as I suppose,
 Or else certēs ye be too dangerous.¹²
 It is a moral talē virtuous,
 All be it¹³ told sometimes in sundry wise
 By sundry folk, as I shall you devise.
 As thus, ye wot that ev'ry Evangelist,
 That telleth us the pain¹⁴ of Jesus Christ,
 He saith not all thing as his fellow doth;
 But natheless their sentence is all soth,¹⁵
 And all accorden as in their sentence,¹⁶
 All be there in their telling difference;
 For some of them say more, and some say less,
 When they his piteous passiōn express;
 I mean of Mark and Matthew, Luke and John;
 But doubtless their sentence is all one.
 Therefore, lordingēs all, I you beseech,
 If that ye think I vary in my speech,
 As thus, though that I tellē somedeal more

¹ Illiterateness, stupidity. Chaucer crowns the satire on the romancists by making the very landlord of the Tabard cry out in indignant disgust against the stuff which he had heard recited—the good Host ascribing to sheer ignorance the string of pompous platitudes and prosaic details which Chaucer had uttered.

² Surely.

³ Worthless, vile; no better than druff or dregs; from the Anglo-Saxon, "drifan," to drive away, expel.

⁴ Commend to.

⁵ Prevent.

⁶ Spendest, wastest.

⁷ Whether.

⁸ By way of narrative.

⁹ Some amusement or instruction.

¹⁰ Suffering.

¹¹ Ought to please you.

¹² Fastidious.

¹³ Although it be.

¹⁴ Agony, passion.

¹⁵ Sooth, true.

¹⁶ Meaning.

¹⁷ With which to enforce.

¹⁸ That.

¹⁹ Little.

²⁰ The Tale of Melibœus is literally translated from a French story, or rather "treatise," in prose, entitled "Le Livre de Melibée et de Dame Prudence;" of which two manuscripts, both dating from the fifteenth century, are preserved in the British Museum. Tyrwhitt, justly enough, says of it that it is indeed, as Chaucer called it in the prologue, "a moral talē virtuous," and was probably much esteemed in its time; but, in this age of levity, I doubt some readers will be apt to regret that he did not rather give us the remainder of Sir Thopas. It has been remarked that in the earlier portion of the Tale, as it left the hand of the poet, a number of blank verses were intermixed; though this peculiarity of style, noticeable in any case only in the

Of proverbēs, than ye have heard before
 Comprehended in this little treatise here,
 T' enforcē with¹⁷ the effect of my mattēre,
 And though I not the samē wordēs say
 As ye have heard, yet to you all I pray
 Blamē me not; for as in my sentence
 Shall ye nowhere findē no difference
 From the sentence of thilkē¹⁸ treatise lite,¹⁹
 After the which this merry tale I write.
 And therefore hearken to what I shall say,
 And let me tellen all my tale, I pray."

THE TALE.²⁰

A young man called Melibœus, mighty and rich, begat upon his wife, that called was Prudence, a daughter which that called was Sophia. Upon a day befell, that he for his disport went into the fields him to play. His wife and eke his daughter hath he left within his house, of which the doors were fast shut. Three of his old foes have it espied, and set ladders to the walls of his house, and by the windows be entered, and beaten his wife, and wounded his daughter with five mortal wounds, in five sundry places; that is to say, in her feet, in her hands, in her ears, in her nose, and in her mouth; and left her for dead, and went away. When Melibœus returned was into his house, and saw all this mischief, he, like a man mad, rending his clothes, gan weep and cry. Prudence his wife, as farforth as she durst, besought him of his weeping for to stint: but not forthy²¹ he gan to weep and cry ever longer the more.

This noble wife Prudence remembered her upon the sentence of Ovid, in his book that called is the "Remedy of Love,"²² where he saith: He is a fool that disturbeth the mother to weep in the death of her child, till she have wept her fill, as for a certain time; and then shall a man do his diligence with amiable words

first 160 or 200 lines, has necessarily all but disappeared by the changes of spelling made in the modern editions. The Editor's purpose being to present to the public not "The Canterbury Tales" merely, but "The Poems" of Chaucer, so far as may be consistent with the limits of this volume, he has condensed the long reasonings and learned quotations of Dame Prudence into a mere outline, connecting those portions of the Tale wherein lies so much of story as it actually possesses; and the general reader will probably not regret the sacrifice, made in the view of retaining so far as possible the completeness of the Tales, while lessening the intrusion of prose into a volume of poems. The good wife of Melibœus literally overflows with quotations from David, Solomon, Jesus the Son of Sirach, the Apostles, Ovid, Cicero, Seneca, Cassiodorus, Cato, Petrus Alphonsus—the converted Spanish Jew, of the twelfth century, who wrote the "Disciplina Clericalis"—and other authorities; and in some passages, especially where husband and wife debate the merits or demerits of women, and where Prudence dilates on the evils of poverty, Chaucer only reproduces much that had been said already in the Tales that preceded—such as the Merchant's and the Man of Law's.

²¹ Notwithstanding.

²² "Quis matrem, nisi mentis inops, in funere nati
 Flere vetet? non hoc illa monenda loco.

Cum dederit lacrymas, animumque expleverit
 ægrum,

Ille dolor verbis emoderandus erit."

—"Remed. Amor.," 127-131.

her to recomfort and pray her of her weeping for to stint.¹ For which reason this noble wife Prudence suffered her husband for to weep and cry, as for a certain space; and when she saw her time, she said to him in this wise: "Alas! my lord," quoth she, "why make ye yourself for to be like a fool? For sooth it appertaineth not to a wise man to make such a sorrow. Your daughter, with the grace of God, shall warish² and escape. And all³ were it so that she right now were dead, ye ought not for her death yourself to destroy. Seneca saith, 'The wise man shall not take too great discomfort for the death of his children, but certes he should suffer it in patience, as well as he abideth the death of his own proper person.'"

Melibœus answered anon and said: "What man," quoth he, "should of his weeping stint, that hath so great a cause to weep? Jesus Christ, our Lord, himself wept for the death of Lazarus his friend." Prudence answered, "Certes, well I wot, attempered⁴ weeping is nothing defended⁵ to him that sorrowful is, among folk in sorrow, but it is rather granted him to weep. The Apostle Paul unto the Romans writeth, 'Man shall rejoice with them that make joy, and weep with such folk as weep.' But though temperate weeping be granted, outrageous weeping certes is defended. Measure of weeping should be conserved,⁶ after the lore⁷ that teacheth us Seneca. 'When that thy friend is dead,' quoth he, 'let not thine eyes too moist be of tears, nor too much dry: although the tears come to thine eyes, let them not fall. And when thou hast forgone⁸ thy friend, do diligence to get again another friend: and this is more wisdom than to weep for thy friend which that thou hast lorn,⁹ for therein is no boot.'¹⁰ And therefore if ye govern you by sapience, put away sorrow out of your heart. Remember you that Jesus Sirach saith, 'A man that is joyous and glad in heart, it him conserveth flourishing in his age: but soothly a sorrowful heart maketh his bones dry.' He saith eke thus, 'that sorrow in heart alayeth full many a man.' Solomon saith, 'that right as moths in the sheep's fleece annoy¹¹ to the clothes, and the small worms to the tree, right so annoyeth sorrow to the heart of man.' Wherefore us ought as well in the death of our children, as in the loss of our goods temporal, have patience. Remember you upon the patient Job, when he had lost his children and his temporal substance, and in his body endured and received full many a grievous tribulation, yet said he thus: 'Our Lord hath given it to me, our Lord hath bereft it me; right as our Lord would, right so be it done; blessed be the name of our Lord.'"

To these foresaid things answered Melibœus unto his wife Prudence: "All thy words,"

quoth he, "be true, and thereto¹² profitable, but truly mine heart is troubled with this sorrow so grievously, that I know not what to do." "Let call," quoth Prudence, "thy true friends all, and thy lineage, which be wise, and tell to them your case, and hearken what they say in counselling, and govern you after their sentence.¹³ Solomon saith, 'Work all things by counsel, and thou shalt never repent.'"

Then, by counsel of his wife Prudence, this Melibœus let call¹⁴ a great congregation of folk, as surgeons, physicians, old folk and young, and some of his old enemies reconciled (as by their semblance) to his love and to his grace; and therewithal there come some of his neighbours, that did him reverence more for dread than for love, as happeneth oft. There come also full many subtle flatterers, and wise advocates learned in the law. And when these folk together assembled were, this Melibœus in sorrowful wise showed them his case, and by the manner of his speech it seemed that in heart he bare a cruel ire, ready to do vengeance upon his foes, and suddenly desired that the war should begin, but nevertheless yet asked he their counsel in this matter. A surgeon, by licence and assent of such as were wise, up rose, and to Melibœus said as ye may hear. "Sir," quoth he, "as to us surgeons appertaineth, that we do to every wight the best that we can, where as we be withholden,¹⁵ and to our patient that we do no damage; wherefore it happeneth many a time and oft, that when two men have wounded each other, one same surgeon healeth them both; wherefore unto our art it is not pertinent to nurse war, nor parties to support.¹⁶ But certes, as to the warishing¹⁷ of your daughter, albeit so that perilously she be wounded, we shall do so attentive business from day to night, that, with the grace of God, she shall be whole and sound, as soon as is possible." Almost right in the same wise the physicians answered, save that they said a few words more: that right as maladies be cured by their contraries, right so shall man warish war [by peace]. His neighbours full of envy, his feigned friends that seemed reconciled, and his flatterers, made semblance of weeping, and impaired and aggregated much of this matter,¹⁸ in praising greatly Melibœus of might, of power, of riches, and of friends, despising the power of his adversaries: and said utterly, that he anon should wreak him on his foes, and begin war.

Up rose then an advocate that was wise, by leave and by counsel of other that were wise, and said, "Lordings, the need¹⁹ for which we be assembled in this place, is a full heavy thing, and an high matter, because of the wrong and of the wickedness that hath been done, and eke by reason of the great damages that in time coming be possible to fall for the same cause,

¹ Cease.

² Be healed.

³ Although.

⁴ Moderate.

⁵ Forbidden.

⁶ Moderation should be kept or observed.

⁷ Doctrine.

⁸ Lost.

⁹ Advantage, remedy.

¹⁰ Do injury.

¹¹ Also.

¹² Opinion.

¹³ Caused to be summoned.

¹⁴ Employed, retained.

¹⁵ To take sides in a quarrel.

¹⁶ Healing.

¹⁷ Made worse and aggravated the matter.

¹⁸ Business.

and eke by reason of the great riches and power of the parties both; for which reasons, it were a full great peril to err in this matter. Wherefore, Melibœus, this is our sentence;¹ we counsel you, above all things, that right anon thou do thy diligence in keeping of thy body, in such a wise that thou want no espy² nor watch thy body to save. And after that, we counsel that in thine house thou set sufficient garrison, so that they may as well thy body as thy house defend. But, certes, to move war, or suddenly to do vengeance, we may not deem³ in so little time that it were profitable. Wherefore we ask leisure and space to have deliberation in this case to deem; for the common proverb saith thus; 'He that soon deemeth, soon shall repent.' And eke men say, that that judge is wise, that soon understandeth a matter, and judgeth by leisure. For albeit so that all tarrying be annoying, algates⁴ it is no reproof⁵ in giving of judgment, nor in vengeance taking, when it is sufficient and reasonable. And that shewed our Lord Jesus Christ by example; for when that the woman that was taken in adultery was brought in his presence to know what should be done with her person, albeit that he wist well himself what he would answer, yet would he not answer suddenly, but he would have deliberation, and in the ground he wrote twice. And by these causes we ask deliberation; and we shall then by the grace of God counsel the thing that shall be profitable."

Up started then the young folk anon at once, and the most part of that company have scorned these old wise men, and begun to make noise and said, "Right as while that iron is hot men should smite, right so men should wreak their wrongs while that they be fresh and new:" and with loud voice they cried, "War! War!" Up rose then one of these old wise, and with his hand made countenance⁶ that men should hold them still, and give him audience. "Lordings," quoth he, "there is full many a man that crieth, 'War! war!' that wot full little what war amounteth. War at his beginning hath so great an entering and so large, that every wight may enter when him liketh, and lightly⁷ find war: but certes what end shall fall thereof, it is not light to know. For soothly when war is once begun, there is full many a child unborn of his mother, that shall sterve⁸ young, by cause of that war, or else live in sorrow and die in wretchedness; and therefore, ere that any war be begun, men must have great counsel and great deliberation." And when this old man weened⁹ to enforce his tale by reasons, well-nigh all at once began they to rise, for to break his tale, and bid him full oft his words abridge. For soothly he that preacheth to them that list not hear his words, his sermon them annoyeth. For Jesus Sirach saith, that music

in weeping is a noyous¹⁰ thing. This is to say, as much availeth to speak before folk to whom his speech annoyeth, as to sing before him that weepeth. And when this wise man saw that him wanted audience, all shamefast he sat him down again. For Solomon saith, "Where as thou mayest have no audience, enforce thee not to speak." "I see well," quoth this wise man, "that the common proverb is sooth, that good counsel wanteth, when it is most need." Yet¹¹ had this Melibœus in his council many folk, that privily in his ear counselled him certain thing, and counselled him the contrary in general audience. When Melibœus had heard that the greatest part of his council were accorded¹² that he should make war, anon he consented to their counselling, and fully affirmed their sentence.¹³

[Dame Prudence, seeing her husband's resolution thus taken, in full humble wise, when she saw her time, begins to counsel him against war, by a warning against haste in requital of either good or evil. Melibœus tells her that he will not work by her counsel, because he should be held a fool if he rejected for her advice the opinion of so many wise men; because all women are bad; because it would seem that he had given her the mastery over him; and because she could not keep his secret, if he resolved to follow her advice. To these reasons Prudence answers that it is no folly to change counsel when things, or men's judgments of them, change—especially to alter a resolution taken on the impulse of a great multitude of folk, where every man crieth and clattereth what him liketh; that if all women had been wicked, Jesus Christ would never have descended to be born of a woman, nor have showed himself first to a woman after his resurrection—and that when Solomon said he had found no good woman, he meant that God alone was supremely good;¹⁴ that her husband would not seem to give her the mastery by following her counsel, for he had his own free choice in following or rejecting it; and that he knew well and had often tested her great silence, patience, and secrecy. And whereas he had quoted a saying, that in wicked counsel women vanquish men, she reminds him that she would counsel him against doing a wickedness on which he had set his mind, and cites instances to show that many women have been and yet are full good, and their counsel wholesome and profitable. Lastly, she quotes the words of God himself, when he was about to make woman as an help meet for man; and promises that, if her husband will trust her counsel, she will restore to him his daughter whole and sound, and make him have honour in this case. Melibœus answers that because of his wife's sweet words, and also because he has proved and

¹ Opinion.² Observation, looking out.³ Nevertheless.⁴ Subject for reproach.⁵ Easily.⁶ Determine.⁷ A sign, gesture.⁸ Die.⁹ Thought, intended.¹⁰ Besides, further.¹¹ Opinion, judgment.¹² See the conversation between Plato and Proserpine, *ante*, pp. 113 and 114.¹³ Troublesome.¹⁴ Agreed.

assayed her great wisdom and her great truth, he will govern him by her counsel in all things. Thus encouraged, Prudence enters on a long discourse, full of learned citations, regarding the manner in which counsellors should be chosen and consulted, and the times and reasons for changing a counsel. First, God must be besought for guidance. Then a man must well examine his own thoughts, of such things as he holds to be best for his own profit; driving out of his heart anger, covetousness, and hastiness, which perturb and pervert the judgment. Then he must keep his counsel secret, unless confiding it to another shall be more profitable; but, in so confiding it, he shall say nothing to bias the mind of the counsellor toward flattery or subserviency. After that he should consider his friends and his enemies, choosing of the former such as be most faithful and wise, and eldest and most approved in counselling; and even of these only a few. Then he must eschew the counselling of fools, of flatterers, of his old enemies that be reconciled, of servants who bear him great reverence and fear, of folk that be drunken and can hide no counsel, of such as counsel one thing privily and the contrary openly; and of young folk, for their counselling is not ripe. Then, in examining his counsel, he must truly tell his tale; he must consider whether the thing he proposes to do be reasonable, within his power, and acceptable to the more part and the better part of his counsellors; he must look at the things that may follow from that counselling, choosing the best and waiving all besides; he must consider the root whence the matter of his counsel is engendered, what fruits it may bear, and from what causes they be sprung. And having thus examined his counsel and approved it by many wise folk and old, he shall consider if he may perform it and make of it a good end; if he be in doubt, he shall choose rather to suffer than to begin; but otherwise he shall prosecute his resolution steadfastly till the enterprise be at an end. As to changing his counsel, a man may do so without reproach, if the cause cease, or when a new case betides, or if he find that by error or otherwise harm or damage may result, or if his counsel be dishonest or come of dishonest cause, or if it be impossible or may not properly be kept; and he must take it for a general rule, that every counsel which is affirmed so strongly, that it may not be changed for any condition that may betide, that counsel is wicked. Melibœus, admitting that his wife has spoken well and suitably as to counsellors and counsel in general, prays her to tell him in especial what she thinks of the counsellors whom they have chosen in their present need. Prudence replies that his counsel in this case could not properly be called a counselling, but a movement of folly; and points out that he has erred in sundry wise against the rules which he had just laid down. Granting that he has erred, Melibœus says that he is all ready to change his counsel right

as she will devise; for, as the proverb runs, to do sin is human, but to persevere long in sin is work of the Devil. Prudence then minutely recites, analyses, and criticises the counsel given to her husband in the assembly of his friends. She commends the advice of the physicians and surgeons, and urges that they should be well rewarded for their noble speech and their services in healing Sophia; and she asks Melibœus how he understands their proposition that one contrary must be cured by another contrary. Melibœus answers, that he should do vengeance on his enemies, who had done him wrong. Prudence, however, insists that vengeance is not the contrary of vengeance, nor wrong of wrong, but the like; and that wickedness should be healed by goodness, discord by accord, war by peace. She proceeds to deal with the counsel of the lawyers and wise folk that advised Melibœus to take prudent measures for the security of his body and of his house. First, she would have her husband pray for the protection and aid of Christ; then commit the keeping of his person to his true friends; then suspect and avoid all strange folk, and liars, and such people as she had already warned him against; then beware of presuming on his strength, or the weakness of his adversary, and neglecting to guard his person—for every wise man dreadeth his enemy; then he should evermore be on the watch against ambush and all espial, even in what seems a place of safety; though he should not be so cowardly, as to fear where is no cause for dread; yet he should dread to be poisoned, and therefore shun scorers, and fly their words as venom. As to the fortification of his house, she points out that towers and great edifices are costly and laborious, yet useless unless defended by true friends that be old and wise; and the greatest and strongest garrison that a rich man may have, as well to keep his person as his goods, is, that he be beloved by his subjects and by his neighbours. Warmly approving the counsel that in all this business Melibœus should proceed with great diligence and deliberation, Prudence goes on to examine the advice given by his neighbours that do him reverence without love, his old enemies reconciled, his flatterers that counselled him certain things privily and openly counselled him the contrary, and the young folk that counselled him to avenge himself and make war at once. She reminds him that he stands alone against three powerful enemies, whose kindred are numerous and close, while his are fewer and remote in relationship; that only the judge who has jurisdiction in a case may take sudden vengeance on any man; that her husband's power does not accord with his desire; and that, if he did take vengeance, it would only breed fresh wrongs and contests. As to the causes of the wrong done to him, she holds that God, the causer of all things, has permitted him to suffer because he has drunk so much honey¹ of sweet temporal riches, and

¹ "Thy name," she says, "is Melibœus; that is to say, a man that drinketh honey."

delights, and honours of this world, that he is drunken, and has forgotten Jesus Christ his Saviour; the three enemies of mankind, the flesh, the fiend, and the world, have entered his heart by the windows of his body, and wounded his soul in five places—that is to say, the deadly sins that have entered into his heart by the five senses; and in the same manner Christ has suffered his three enemies to enter his house by the windows, and wound his daughter in the five places before specified. Melibæus demurs, that if his wife's objections prevailed, vengeance would never be taken, and thence great mischiefs would arise; but Prudence replies that the taking of vengeance lies with the judges, to whom the private individual must have recourse. Melibæus declares that such vengeance does not please him, and that, as Fortune has nourished and helped him from his childhood, he will now assay her, trusting, with God's help, that she will aid him to avenge his shame. Prudence warns him against trusting to Fortune, all the less because she has hitherto favoured him, for just on that account she is the more likely to fail him; and she calls on him to leave his vengeance with the Sovereign Judge, that avengeth all villainies and wrongs. Melibæus argues that if he refrains from taking vengeance he will invite his enemies to do him further wrong, and he will be put and held over low; but Prudence contends that such a result can be brought about only by the neglect of the judges, not by the patience of the individual. Supposing that he had leave to avenge himself, she repeats that he is not strong enough, and quotes the common saw, that it is madness for a man to strive with a stronger than himself, peril to strive with one of equal strength, and folly to strive with a weaker. But, considering his own defaults and demerits—remembering the patience of Christ and the undeserved tribulations of the saints, the brevity of this life with all its trouble and sorrow, the discredit thrown on the wisdom and training of a man who cannot bear wrong with patience—he should refrain wholly from taking vengeance. Melibæus submits that he is not at all a perfect man, and his heart will never be at peace until he is avenged; and that as his enemies disregarded the peril when they attacked him, so he might, without reproach, incur some peril in attacking them in return, even though he did a great excess in avenging one wrong by another. Prudence strongly deprecates all outrage or excess; but Melibæus insists that he cannot see that it might greatly harm him though he took vengeance, for he is richer and mightier than his enemies, and all things obey money. Prudence thereupon launches into a long dissertation on the advantages of riches, the evils of poverty, the means by which wealth should be gathered, and the manner in which it should be used; and concludes by counselling her husband not to move war and battle through trust in his riches, for they suffice not to maintain war, the

¹ Distress, trouble.

battle is not always to the strong or the numerous, and the perils of conflict are many. Melibæus then curtly asks her for her counsel how he shall do in this need; and she answers that certainly she counsels him to agree with his adversaries and have peace with them. Melibæus on this cries out that plainly she loves not his honour or his worship, in counselling him to go and humble himself before his enemies, crying mercy to them that, having done him so grievous wrong, ask him not to be reconciled. Then Prudence, making semblance of wrath, retorts that she loves his honour and profit as she loves her own, and ever has done; she cites the Scriptures in support of her counsel to seek peace; and says she will leave him to his own courses, for she knows well he is so stubborn, that he will do nothing for her. Melibæus then relents; admits that he is angry and cannot judge aright; and puts himself wholly in her hands, promising to do just as she desires, and admitting that he is the more held to love and praise her, if she reproves him of his folly.]

Then Dame Prudence discovered all her counsel and her will unto him, and said: "I counsel you," quoth she, "above all things, that ye make peace between God and you, and be reconciled unto him and to his grace; for, as I have said to you herebefore, God hath suffered you to have this tribulation and disease¹ for your sins; and if ye do as I say you, God will send your adversaries unto you, and make them fall at your feet, ready to do your will and your commandment. For Solomon saith, 'When the condition of man is pleasant and liking to God, he changeth the hearts of the man's adversaries, and constraineth them to beseech him of peace and of grace.' And I pray you let me speak with your adversaries in privy place, for they shall not know it is by your will or your assent; and then, when I know their will and their intent, I may counsel you the more surely." "Dame," quoth Melibæus, "do your will and your liking, for I put me wholly in your disposition and ordinance."

Then Dame Prudence, when she saw the goodwill of her husband, deliberated and took advice in herself, thinking how she might bring this need² unto a good end. And when she saw her time, she sent for these adversaries to come unto her into a privy place, and showed wisely unto them the great goods that come of peace, and the great harms and perils that be in war; and said to them, in goodly manner, how that they ought have great repentance of the injuries and wrongs that they had done to Melibæus her lord, and unto her and her daughter. And when they heard the goodly words of Dame Prudence, then they were surprised and ravished, and had so great joy of her, that wonder was to tell. "Ah lady!" quoth they, "ye have showed unto us the blessing of sweetness, after the saying of David the prophet; for the reconciling which we be not worthy to have in no manner, but we ought require it with great

² Affair, emergency.

contrition and humility, ye of your great goodness have presented unto us. Now see we well, that the science and conning¹ of Solomon is full true; for he saith, that sweet words multiply and increase friends, and make shrews² to be debonair³ and meek. Certes we put our deed, and all our matter and cause, all wholly in your goodwill, and be ready to obey unto the speech and commandment of my lord Melibœus. And therefore, dear and benign lady, we pray you and beseech you as meekly as we can and may, that it like unto your great goodness to fulfil in deed your goodly words. For we consider and acknowledge that we have offended and grieved my lord Melibœus out of measure, so far forth that we be not of power to make him amends; and therefore we oblige and bind us and our friends to do all his will and his commandment. But peradventure he hath such heaviness and such wrath to usward, because of our offence, that he will enjoin us such a pain⁴ as we may not bear nor sustain; and therefore, noble lady, we beseech to your womanly pity to take such advisement⁵ in this need, that we, nor our friends, be not disinherited and destroyed through our folly."

"Certes," quoth Prudence, "it is an hard thing, and right perilous, that a man put him all utterly in the arbitration and judgment and in the might and power of his enemy. For Solomon saith, 'Believe me, and give credence to that that I shall say: to thy son, to thy wife, to thy friend, nor to thy brother, give thou never might nor mastery over thy body, while thou livest.' Now, since he defendeth⁶ that a man should not give to his brother, nor to his friend, the might of his body, by a stronger reason he defendeth and forbiddeth a man to give himself to his enemy. And nevertheless, I counsel you that ye mistrust not my lord: for I wot well and know verily, that he is debonair and meek, large, courteous, and nothing desirous nor covetous of good nor riches: for there is nothing in this world that he desireth save only worship and honour. Furthermore I know well, and am right sure, that he shall nothing do in this need without counsel of me; and I shall so work in this case, that by the grace of our Lord God ye shall be reconciled unto us." Then said they with one voice, "Worshipful lady, we put us and our goods all fully in your will and disposition, and be ready to come, what day that it like unto your nobleness to limit us or assign us, for to make our obligation and bond, as strong as it liketh unto your goodness, that we may fulfil the will of you and of my lord Melibœus."

When Dame Prudence had heard the answer of these men, she bade them go again privily, and she returned to her lord Melibœus, and told him how she found his adversaries full repentant, acknowledging full lowly their sins and trespasses, and how they were ready to

suffer all pain, requiring and praying him of mercy and pity. Then said Melibœus, "He is well worthy to have pardon and forgiveness of his sin, that excuseth not his sin, but acknowledgeth, and repenteth him, asking indulgence. For Seneca saith, 'There is the remission and forgiveness, where the confession is; for confession is neighbour to innocence.' And therefore I assent and confirm me to have peace, but it is good that we do naught without the assent and will of our friends." Then was Prudence right glad and joyful, and said, "Certes, Sir, ye be well and goodly advised; for right as by the counsel, assent, and help of your friends ye have been stirred to avenge you and make war, right so without their counsel shall ye not accord you, nor have peace with your adversaries. For the law saith, 'There is nothing so good by way of kind,'⁷ as a thing to be unbound by him that it was bound."

And then Dame Prudence, without delay or tarrying, sent anon her messengers for their kin and for their old friends, which were true and wise; and told them by order, in the presence of Melibœus, all this matter, as it is above expressed and declared; and prayed them that they would give their advice and counsel what were best to do in this need. And when Melibœus' friends had taken their advice and deliberation of the foresaid matter, and had examined it by great business and great diligence, they gave full counsel for to have peace and rest, and that Melibœus should with good heart receive his adversaries to forgiveness and mercy. And when Dame Prudence had heard the assent of her lord Melibœus, and the counsel of his friends, accord with her will and her intencion, she was wondrous glad in her heart, and said: "There is an old proverb that saith, 'The goodness that thou mayest do this day, do it, and abide not nor delay it not till to-morrow:' and therefore I counsel you that ye send your messengers, such as be discreet and wise, unto your adversaries, telling them on your behalf, that if they will treat of peace and of accord, that they shape⁸ them, without delay or tarrying, to come unto us." Which thing performed was indeed. And when these trespassers and repenting folk of their follies, that is to say, the adversaries of Melibœus, had heard what these messengers said unto them, they were right glad and joyful, and answered full meekly and benignly, yielding graces and thanks to their lord Melibœus, and to all his company; and shaped them without delay to go with the messengers, and obey to the commandment of their lord Melibœus. And right anon they took their way to the court of Melibœus, and took with them some of their true friends, to make faith for them, and for to be their borrows.⁹

And when they were come to the presence of Melibœus, he said to them these words; "It stands thus," quoth Melibœus, "and sooth it

¹ Knowledge.

² The ill-natured or angry. ³ Gentle, courteous.

⁴ Penalty.

⁷ Nature.

⁸ Consideration.

⁹ Prepare.

⁶ Forbiddeth.

⁹ Sureties.

is, that ye causeless, and without skill and reason, have done great injuries and wrongs to me, and to my wife Prudence, and to my daughter also; for ye have entered into my house by violence, and have done such outrage, that all men know well that ye have deserved the death: and therefore will I know and weet of you, whether ye will put the punishing and chastising, and the vengeance of this outrage, in the will of me and of my wife, or ye will not?" Then the wisest of them three answered for them all, and said; "Sir," quoth he, "we know well, that we be unworthy to come to the court of so great a lord and so worthy as ye be, for we have so greatly mistaken us, and have offended and aguilt¹ in such wise against your high lordship, that truly we have deserved the death. But yet for the great goodness and debonairté² that all the world witnesseth of your person, we submit us to the excellence and benignity of your gracious lordship, and be ready to obey to all your commandments, beseeching you, that of your merciable³ pity ye will consider our great repentance and low submission, and grant us forgiveness of our outrageous trespass and offence; for well we know, that your liberal grace and mercy stretch them farther into goodness, than do our outrageous guilt and trespass into wickedness; albeit that cursedly⁴ and damnably we have aguilt¹ against your high lordship." Then Melibæus took them up from the ground full benignly, and received their obligations and their bonds, by their oaths upon their pledges and borrows,⁵ and assigned them a certain day to return unto his court for to receive and accept sentence and judgment, that Melibæus would command to be done on them, by the causes aforesaid; which things ordained, every man returned home to his house.

And when that Dame Prudence saw her time, she freined⁶ and asked her lord Melibæus, what vengeance he thought to take of his adversaries. To which Melibæus answered, and said; "Certes," quoth he, "I think and purpose me fully to disinherit them of all that ever they have, and for to put them in exile for evermore." "Certes," quoth Dame Prudence, "this were a cruel sentence, and much against reason. For ye be rich enough, and have no need of other men's goods; and ye might lightly⁷ in this wise get you a covetous name, which is a vicious thing, and ought to be eschewed of every good man: for, after the saying of the Apostle, covetousness is root of all harms. And therefore it were better for you to lose much good of your own, than for to take of their good in this manner. For better it is to lose good with worship,⁸ than to win good with villainy and shame. And every man ought to do his diligence and his business to get him a good name. And yet⁹ shall he not only busy him in keeping

his good name, but he shall also enforce him alway to do some thing by which he may renew his good name; for it is written, that the old good los¹⁰ of a man is soon gone and passed, when it is not renewed. And as touching that ye say, that ye will exile your adversaries, that thinketh me much against reason, and out of measure,¹¹ considered the power that they have given you upon themselves. And it is written, that he is worthy to lose his privilege, that misuseth the might and the power that is given him. And I set case¹² ye might enjoin them that pain by right and by law (which I trow ye may not do), I say, ye might not put it to execution peradventure, and then it were like to return to the war, as it was before. And therefore if ye will that men do you obeisance, ye must deem¹³ more courteously, that is to say, ye must give more easy sentences and judgments. For it is written, 'He that most courteously commandeth, to him men most obey.' And therefore I pray you, that in this necessity and in this need ye cast you¹⁴ to overcome your heart. For Seneca saith, that he that overcometh his heart, overcometh twice. And Tullius saith, 'There is nothing so commendable in a great lord, as when he is debonair and meek, and appeaseth him lightly.'⁷ And I pray you, that ye will now forbear to do vengeance, in such a manner, that your good name may be kept and conserved, and that men may have cause and matter to praise you of pity and of mercy; and that ye have no cause to repent you of thing that ye do. For Seneca saith, 'He overcometh in an evil manner, that repenteth him of his victory.' Wherefore I pray you let mercy be in your heart, to the effect and intent that God Almighty have mercy upon you in his last judgment; for Saint James saith in his Epistle, 'Judgment without mercy shall be done to him, that hath no mercy of another wight.'

When Melibæus had heard the great skills¹⁵ and reasons of Dame Prudence, and her wise information and teaching, his heart gan incline to the will of his wife, considering her true intent, he conformed him anon and assented fully to work after her counsel, and thanked God, of whom proceedeth all goodness and all virtue, that him sent a wife of so great discretion. And when the day came that his adversaries should appear in his presence, he spake to them full goodly, and said in this wise; "Albeit so, that of your pride and high presumption and folly, and of your negligence and unconning,¹⁶ ye have misborne¹⁷ you, and trespassed¹⁸ unto me, yet forasmuch as I see and behold your great humility, and that ye be sorry and repentant of your guilts, it constraineth me to do you grace and mercy. Wherefore I receive you into my grace, and forgive you utterly all

¹ Incurred guilt.

² Courtesy, gentleness.

³ Merciful.

⁴ Wickedly.

⁵ Sureties.

⁶ Inquired.

⁷ Easily.

⁸ Honour.

⁹ Further.

¹⁰ Reputation; from the past participle of the Anglo-Saxon, "hlisan," to celebrate. Compare Latin, "laus."

¹¹ Moderation.

¹² If I assume.

¹³ Decide.

¹⁴ Endeavour, devise a way.

¹⁵ Arguments, reasons.

¹⁶ Ignorance.

¹⁷ Misbehaved.

¹⁸ Done injury.

the offences, injuries, and wrongs, that ye have done against me and mine, to this effect and to this end, that God of his endless mercy will at the time of our dying forgive us our guilts, that we have trespassed to him in this wretched world; for doubtless, if we be sorry and repentant of the sins and guilts which we have trespassed in the sight of our Lord God, he is so free and so merciable,¹ that he will forgive us our guilts, and bring us to the bliss that never hath end." Amen.

THE MONK'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.

WHEN ended was my tale of Melibee,
And of Prudence and her benignity,
Our Host² said, "As I am faithful man,
And by the precious *corpus Madrian*,³
I had lever⁴ than a barrel of ale,
That good⁵ lefe⁶ my wife had heard this tale;
For she is no thing of such patience
As was this Melibeus' wife Prudence.
By Godd⁷'s bones! when I beat my knaves
She bringeth me the great⁸ clubbed staves,
And crieth, 'Slay the dogg⁹es every one,
And break of them both back and ev'ry bone.'
And if that any neigh¹⁰bour of mine
Will not in church unto my wife incline,¹¹
Or be so hardy to her to trespass,¹²
When she comes home she rampeth¹³ in my
face,
And crieth, 'Fals¹⁴e coward, wreak¹⁵ thy wife:
By *corpus Domini*, I will have thy knife,
And thou shalt have my distaff, and go spin.'
From day till night right thus she will begin.
'Alas!' she saith, 'that ever I was shape¹⁶
To wed a milksop, or a coward ape,
That will be overlad¹⁷ with every wight!
Thou darest not stand by thy wife's right.'
"This is my life, but if¹⁸ that I will fight;
And out at door anon I must me dight,¹⁹
Or ell²⁰es I am lost, but if that I
Be, like a wild²¹e lion, fool-hardy.
I wot well she will do²² me slay some day
Some neigh²³bour, and then²⁴ go my way;²⁵
For I am perilous with knife in hand,
Albeit that I dare not her withstand;
For she is big in arm²⁶es, by my faith!
That shall he find, that her misdoth or saith.²⁷

¹ Merciful.
² The body of St Maternus, of Treves.
³ Rather. ⁴ Dear. ⁵ Bow.
⁶ Bold enough to offend her. ⁷ Leaps, springs.
⁸ Avenge. ⁹ Destined.
¹⁰ Overborne, imposed upon. ¹¹ Unless.
¹² Betake myself. ¹³ Make.
¹⁴ Take to flight.
¹⁵ That does or says anything to displease her.
¹⁶ One doing penance.
¹⁷ In my judgment; for "doom."
¹⁸ Sinews. ¹⁹ A cock.
²⁰ An ecclesiastical vestment covering all the body like a cloak. ²¹ If.

But let us pass away from this matter.
My lord the Monk," quoth he, "be merry of cheer,
For ye shall tell a tal²⁸e truly.
Lo, Rochester stands her²⁹e fast³⁰e by.
Ride forth, mine owen lord, break not our game.
But by my troth I cannot tell your name;
Whether shall I call you my lord Dan John,
Or Dan Thomas, or ell³¹es Dan Albon?
Of what house be ye, by your father's kin?
I vow to God, thou hast a full fair skin;
It is a gentle pasture where thou go'st;
Thou art not like a penant³² or a ghost.
Upon my faith thou art some officer,
Some worthy sexton, or some cellarer.
For by my father's soul, as to my dome,³³
Thou art a master when thou art at home;
No poor³⁴e cloisterer, nor no novice,
But a gov³⁵ernor, both wily and wise,
And therewithal, of brawn³⁶es³⁷ and of bones,
A right well-faring person for the nonce.
I pray to God give him confus³⁸ion
That first thee brought into religi³⁹on.
Thou wouldest have been a tread⁴⁰e-fowl⁴¹ aright;
Hadst thou as great⁴²e leave, as thou hast might,
To perform all thy lust in engendr⁴³ure,
Thou hadst begotten many a creature.
Alas! why wearest thou so wide a cope?⁴⁴
God give me sorrow, but, an'⁴⁵ I were pope,
Not only thou, but every mighty man,
Though he were shorn full high upon his pan,⁴⁶
Should have a wife; for all this world is lorn;⁴⁷
Religi⁴⁸on hath ta'en up all the corn
Of treading, and we borel⁴⁹ men be shrimps:⁵⁰
Of feeble trees there com⁵¹e wretched imps.⁵²
This maketh that our heir⁵³es be so slender
And feeble, that they may not well engender.
This maketh that our wiv⁵⁴es will assay
Religious folk, for they may better pay
Of Venus' pay⁵⁵ment⁵⁶es than may we:
God wot, no lush⁵⁷eburgh⁵⁸es⁵⁹ pay⁶⁰e ye.
But be not wroth, my lord, though that I play;
Full oft in game a sooth have I heard say."

This worthy Monk took all in patience,
And said, "I will do all my diligence,
As far as souneth unto honesty,⁶¹
To tell⁶² you a tale, or two or three.
And if you list to hearken hitherward,
I will you say the life of Saint Edward;
Or ell⁶³es first trag⁶⁴edies I will tell,
Of which I have an hundred in my cell.
Trag⁶⁵edy is to say⁶⁶ a certain story,
As old⁶⁷e book⁶⁸es maken us mem⁶⁹ory,
Of him that stood in great prosperi⁷⁰ty,

²⁸ Crown; though he were tonsured, as the clergy are. ²⁹ Undone, ruined. ³⁰ Lay, unlettered.
³¹ Puny, contemptible creatures.
³² Shoots, branches; from Anglo-Saxon, "implan," German, "impfen," to implant, ingraft. The word is now used in a very restricted sense, to signify the progeny, children, of the devil.
³³ Base or counterfeit coins; so called because struck at Luxemburg. A great importation of them took place during the reigns of the earlier Edwards, and they caused much annoyance and complaint, till in 1351 it was declared treason to bring them into the country.
³⁴ Is in harmony with good manners. ³⁵ Means.

And is y-fallen out of high degree
In misery, and endeth wretchedly.
And they be versifiéd commonly
Of six feet, which men call hexámétron ;
In prose eke be indited many a one,
And eke in metre, in many a sundry wise.
Lo, this declaring ought enough suffice.
Now hearken, if ye likè for to hear.
But first I you beseech in this mattére,
Though I by order tellè not these things,
Be it of popës, emperors, or kings,
After their ages,¹ as men written find,
But tell them some before and some behind,
As it now cometh to my remembrance,
Have me excused of mine ignorance."

THE TALE.²

I will bewail, in manner of tragédy,
The harm of them that stood in high degree,
And fellè so, that there was no remédy
To bring them out of their adversity.
For, certain, when that Fortune list to flee,
There may no man the course of her wheel hold :
Let no man trust in blind prosperity ;
Beware by these examples true and old.

At LUCIFER, though he an angel were,
And not a man, at him I will begin.
For though Fortunè may no angel dere,³
From high degree yet fell he for his sin
Down into hell, where as he yet is in.
O Lucifer! brightest of angels all,
Now art thou Satanas, that may'st not twin⁴
Out of the misery in which thou art fall.

Lo ADAM, in the field of Damascene⁵
With Goddè's owen finger wrought was he,
And not begotten of man's sperm unclean ;
And walt⁶ all Paradise saving one tree :
Had never worldly man so high degree
As Adam, till he for misgovernance⁷
Was driven out of his prosperity
To labour, and to hell, and to mischance.

Lo SAMPSON, which that was annunciate
By the angel, long ere his nativity ;⁸
And was to God Almighty consecrate,
And stood in nobless while that he might see ;
Was never such another as was he,
To speak of strength, and thereto hardiness ;⁹
But to his wivès told he his secré,
Through which he slew himself for wretched-
ness.

Sampson, this noble and mighty champiôn,
Withoutè weapon, save his handès tway,
He slew and all to-rentè¹⁰ the lión,

Toward his wedding walking by the way.
His falsè wife could him so please, and pray,
Till she his counsel knew ; and she, untrue,
Unto his foes his counsel gan bewray,
And him forsook, and took another new.

Three hundred foxes Sampson took for ire,
And all their tailès he together band,
And set the foxes' tailès all on fire,
For he in every tail had knit a brand,
And they burnt all the cornès of that land,
And all their olivères¹¹ and vinès eke.
A thousand men he slew eke with his hand,
And had no weapon but an ass's cheek.

When they were slain, so thirsted him, that
he

Was well-nigh lorn,¹² for which he gan to pray
That God would on his pain have some pity,
And send him drink, or ellès must he die ;
And of this ass's cheek, that was so dry,
Out of a wang-tooth¹³ sprang anon a well,
Of which he drank enough, shortly to say.
Thus help'd him God, as *Judicum*¹⁴ can tell.

By very force, at Gaza, on a night,
Maugré the Philistines of that city,
The gatès of the town he hath up plight,¹⁵
And on his back y-carried them hath he
High on an hill, where as men might them see.
O noble mighty Sampson, lefe¹⁶ and dear,
Hadst thou not told to women thy secré,
In all this world there had not been thy peer.

This Sampson never cider drank nor wine,
Nor on his head came razor none nor shear,
By precept of the messenger divine ;
For all his strengthès in his hairès were ;
And fully twenty winters, year by year,
He had of Israel the governance ;
But soonè shall he weepè many a tear,
For women shall him bringè to mischance.

Unto his leman¹⁷ Dalila¹⁸ he told,
That in his hairès all his strengthè lay ;
And falsely to his foemen she him sold,
And sleeping in her barme¹⁹ upon a day
She made to clip or shear his hair away,
And made his foemen all his craft espian.
And when they foundè him in this array,
They bound him fast, and put out both his eyen.

But, ere his hair was clipped or y-shave,
There was no bond with which men might him
bind ;

But now is he in prison in a cave,
Where as they made him at the quernè²⁰ grind.
O noble Sampson, strongest of mankind !
O whilom judge in glory and richéas !
Now may'st thou weepè with thine eyen blind,
Since thou from weal art fall'n to wretchedness.

¹ According to the dates at which they lived."

² The Monk's Tale is founded in its main features on Boccaccio's work, "De Casibus Virorum Illustrium ;" but Chaucer has taken the separate stories of which it is composed from different authors, and dealt with them after his own fashion.

³ Hurt.

⁴ Depart.

⁵ Boccaccio opens his book with Adam, whose story is told at much greater length than here. Lydgate, in his translation from Boccaccio, speaks of Adam and Eve as made "of slime of the erth in Damascene the felde."

⁶ Wielded, had at his command.

⁷ Misbehaviour.

⁸ Judges xiii. 3. Boccaccio also tells the story of Samson ; but Chaucer seems, by his quotation a few lines below, to have taken his version direct from the sacred book.

⁹ Courage.

¹⁰ Tore all to pieces.

¹¹ Olive trees ; French, "oliviers."

¹² Was near to perishing.

¹³ Check-tooth.

¹⁴ "Liber Judicum," the Book of Judges ; chap. xv.

¹⁵ Plucked, wrrenched.

¹⁶ Loved.

¹⁷ Mistress.

¹⁸ Chaucer writes it "Dalida."

¹⁹ Lap.

²⁰ Mill ; from Anglo-Saxon, "cyrran," to turn, "cweorn," a mill.

Th' end of this caitiff¹ was as I shall say ;
His foemen made a feast upon a day,
And made him as their fool before them play ;
And this was in a temple of great array.
But at the last he made a foul affray,
For he two pillars shook, and made them fall,
And down fell temple and all, and there it lay,
And slew himself and eke his foemen all ;

This is to say, the princes every one ;
And eke three thousand bodies were there slain
With falling of the great temple of stone.
Of Sampson now will I no more sayn ;
Beware by this example old and plain,
That no man tell his counsel to his wife
Of such thing as he would have secret fain,
If that it touch his limbës or his life.

Of HERCULES the sov'reign conquerour
Singë his workës' land and high renown ;
For in his time of strength he bare the flow'r.
He slew and reft the skin of the lion ;
He of the Centaurs laid the boast adown ;
He Harpies² slew, the cruel birdës fell ;
He golden apples reft from the dragon ;
He drew out Cerberus the hound of hell.

He slew the cruel tyrant Busiris,³
And made his horse to fret⁴ him flesh and bone ;
He slew the fiery serpent venomous ;
Of Achelous' two hornës brake he one.
And he slew Cacus in a cave of stone ;
He slew the giant Antæus the strong ;
He slew the grisly boar, and that anon ;
And bare the heav'n upon his neckë long.⁵

Was never wight, since that the world began,
That slew so many monsters as did he ;
Throughout the widë world his namë ran,
What for his strength, and for his high bountë ;
And every realmë went he for to see ;
He was so strong that no man might him let ;
At both the worldë's ends, as saith Trophee,⁶
Instead of boundës he a pillar set.

A leman had this noble champion,
That hightë Dejanira, fresh as May ;
And, as these clerkës makë mention,
She hath him sent a shirtë fresh and gay ;
Alas ! this shirt, alas and well-away !
Envenomed was subtilly withal,
That ere that he had worn it half a day,
It made his flesh all from his bonës fall.

But natheless some clerkës her excuse
By one, that hightë Nessus, that it maked ;
Be as he may, I will not her accuse ;
But on his back this shirt he wore all naked,
Till that his flesh was for the venom blaked.⁷

¹ Wretched man.

² The Stymphalian Birds, which fed on human flesh.

³ Busiris, king of Egypt, was wont to sacrifice all foreigners coming to his dominions. Hercules was seized, bound, and led to the altar by his orders, but the hero broke his bonds and slew the tyrant.

⁴ Devour.

⁵ A long time. The feats of Hercules here recorded are not all those known as the "twelve labours;" for instance, the cleansing of the Augean stables, and the capture of Hippolyte's girdle, are not in this list.—other and less famous deeds of the hero taking their place. For this, however, we must accuse not Chaucer, but Boethius, whom he has almost literally translated, though with some change of order.

And when he saw none other remedy,
In hotë coals he hath himselfë raked,
For with no venom deigned he to die.

Thus starf⁸ this worthy mighty Hercules.
Lo, who may trust on Fortune any throw ?⁹
For him that followeth all this world of pres,¹⁰
Ere he be ware, is often laid full low ;
Full wise is he that can himselfë know.
Beware, for when that Fortune list to glose,
Then waiteth she her man to overthrow,
By such a way as he would least suppose.

The mighty throne, the precious treasör,
The glorious sceptre, and royal majesty,
That had the king NABUCHODONOSOR,
With tongue unnethës¹¹ may described be.
He twice won Jerusalem the city,
The vessels of the temple he with him lad ;¹²
At Babylonë was his sov'reign see,¹³
In which his glory and delight he had.

The fairest children of the blood royäl
Of Israel he did do¹⁴ geld anon,
And maked each of them to be his thrall.¹⁵
Amongës others Daniel was one,
That was the wisest child of every one ;
For he the dreamës of the king expounded,
Where in Chaldea clerkë was there none
That wistë to what fine¹⁶ his dreamës sounded.

This proudë king let make a statue of gold
Sixty cubitës long, and seven in bread',
To which imaginë bothë young and old
Commanded he to lout,¹⁷ and have in dread,
Or in a furnace, full of flamës red,
He should be burnt that wouldë not obey :
But never would assentë to that deed
Daniel, nor his youngë fellows tway.

This king of kingës proud was and elate ;
He wean'd¹⁸ that God, that sits in majesty,
Mightë him not bereave of his estate ;
But suddenly he lost his dignity,
And like a beast he seemed for to be,
And ate hay as an ox, and lay thereout
In rain, with wildë beastës walked he,
Till certain timë was y-come about.

And like an eagle's feathers wax'd his hairs,
His nailës like a birdë's clawës were,
Till God released him at certain years,
And gave him wit ; and then with many a tear
He thanked God, and ever his life in fear
Was he to do amiss, or more trespass :
And till that time he laid was on his bier,
He knew that God was full of might and grace.

His sonë, which that hightë BALTHASAR,
That held the regne¹⁹ after his father's day,

⁶ One of the manuscripts has a marginal reference to "Tropheus vates Chaldeorum;" but it is not known what author Chaucer meant—unless the reference is to a passage in the "Filostrato" of Boccaccio, on which Chaucer founded his "Trollus and Cressida," and which Lydgate mentions, under the name of "Trophe," as having been translated by Chaucer.

⁷ Blackened.

⁸ Died.

⁹ For a moment.

¹⁰ Near ; French, "pres;" the meaning seems to be, this nearer, lower world.

¹¹ Scarcely.

¹² Took away.

¹³ Sent.

¹⁴ Caused.

¹⁵ Slave.

¹⁶ End.

¹⁷ Bow down, do honour.

¹⁸ Thought.

¹⁹ Possessed the kingdom.

He by his father could not beware,
For proud he was of heart and of array;
And eke an idolaster was he aye.
His high estate assured¹ him in pride;
But Fortune cast him down, and there he lay,
And suddenly his regnē gan divide.

A feast he made unto his lordēs all
Upon a time, and made them blithē be,
And then his officērēs gan he call;
"Go, bringē forth the vessels," saidē he,
"Which that my father in his prosperity
Out of the temple of Jerusalem reft,
And to our highē goddēs thankē we
Of honour, that our elders² with us left."

His wife, his lordēs, and his concubines
Aye drankē, while their appetites did last,
Out of these noble vessels sundry wines.
And on a wall this king his eyen cast,
And saw an hand, armless, that wrote full fast;
For fear of which he quaked, and sighed sore.
This hand, that Balthasar so sore aghast,³
Wrote *Mane, tekēl, phares*, and no more.

In all that land magician was there none
That could expoundē what this letter meant.
But Daniel expounded it anon,
And said, "O King, God to thy father lent
Glory and honour, regnē, treasure, rent;⁴
And he was proud, and nothing God he drad;⁵
And therefore God great wreche⁶ upon him
sent,
And him bereft the regnē that he had.

"He was cast out of mannē's company;
With asses was his habitatiōn;
And ate hay, as a beast, in wet and dry,
Till that he knew by grace and by reasōn
That God of heaven hath dominatiōn
O'er every regne, and every creatūre;
And then had God of him compassiōn,
And him restor'd his regne and his figure.

"Eke thou, that art his son, art proud also,
And knowest all these thingēs verily;
And art rebel to God, and art his foe.
Thou drankest of his vessels boldēly;
Thy wife eke, and thy wenches, sinfully
Drank of the samē vessels sundry winēs,
And heried⁷ falsē goddēs cursedly;⁸
Therefore to thee y-shapen⁹ full great pine¹⁰ is.

"This hand was sent from God, that on the
wall
Wrote *Mane, tekēl, phares*, trustē me;
Thy reign is done; thou weighest naught at all;
Divided is thy regne, and it shall be
To Medēs and to Persians giv'n," quoth he.
And thilkē samē night this king was slaw;¹¹
And Darius occupied his degree,
Though he thereto had neither right nor law.

Lordings, example hereby may ye take,
How that in lordship¹² is no sickness;¹³

¹ Confirmed.

² Forefathers.

³ Dismayed.

⁴ Revenue.

⁵ Dreaded.

⁶ Vengeance.

⁷ Praised.

⁸ Impiously.

⁹ Deceit.

¹⁰ Punishment.

¹³ Security.

¹¹ Slain.

¹² Power.

¹⁴ Chaucer has taken the story of Zenobia from Boccaccio's work "*De Claris Mulleribus*."

¹⁵ Noble qualities.

¹⁶ Persia.

For when that Fortune will a man forsake,
She bears away his regne and his richēss,
And eke his friendēs bothē more and less.
For what man that hath friendēs through
fortune,

Mishap will make them enemies, I guess;
This proverb is full sooth, and full commūne.

ZENOBIA, of Palmyrie the queen,¹⁴
As writē Persians of her noblēss,
So worthy was in armēs, and so keen,
That no wight passed her in hardiness,
Nor in lineāge, nor other gentleness.¹⁵
Of the king's blood of Perse¹⁶ is she descended;
I say not that she haddē most fairnēss,
But of her shape she might not be amended.

From her childhood I findē that she fled
Office of woman, and to woods she went,
And many a wildē hartē's blood she shed
With arrows broad that she against them sent;
She was so swift, that she anon them hent.¹⁷
And when that she was older, she would kill
Lions, leopārd, and bearēs all to-rent,
And in her armēs wield them at her will.

She durst the wildē beastēs' dennēs seek,
And runnen in the mountains all the night,
And sleep under a bush; and she could eke
Wrestle¹⁸ by very force and very might
With any young man, were he ne'er so wight;¹⁹
There mightē nothing in her armēs stond.
She kept her maidenhood from every wight,
To no man deigned she for to be bond.

But at the last her friendēs have her married
To Odenate,²⁰ a prince of that countrē;
All were it so, that she them longē tarried.
And ye shall understandē how that he
Haddē such fantasies as haddē she;
But natheless, when they were knit in fere,²¹
They liv'd in joy, and in felicity,
For each of them had other lefe²² and dear.

Save one thing, that she never would assent,
By no way, that he shouldē by her lie
But onēs, for it was her plain intent
To have a child, the world to multiply;
And all so soon as that she might espy
That she was not with childē by that deed,
Then would she suffer him do his fantasy
Eftsoon,²³ and not but onēs, out of dread.²⁴

And if she were with child at thilkē cast,
No morē should he playē thilkē game
Till fully forty dayēs werē past;
Then would she once suffer him do the same.
All²⁵ were this Odenatus wild or tame,
He got no more of her; for thus she said,
It was to wivēs lechery and shame
In other case²⁶ if that men with them play'd.

Two sonēs by this Odenate had she,
The which she kept in virtue and lettrure.²⁷
But now unto our talē turnē we;

¹⁷ Caught.

¹⁸ Active, nimble.

¹⁹ Odenatus, who, for his services to the Romans, received from Gallienus the title of "Augustus;" he was assassinated in A.D. 266—not, it was believed, without the connivance of Zenobia, who succeeded him on the throne.

²⁰ Together.

²¹ Loved.

²² Again.

²³ Doubt.

²⁴ Whether.

²⁵ On other terms, in other wise.

²⁶ Learning.

I say, so worshipful a creature,
And wise therewith, and largē with measūre,¹
So penible² in the war, and courteous eke,
Nor morē labour might in war endure,
Was none, though all this worldē men should seek.

Her rich array it mightē not be told,
As well in vessel³ as in her clothing:
She was all clad in pierrie⁴ and in gold,
And eke she leftē not,⁵ for no hunting,
To have of sundry tonguēs full knowing,
When that she leisure had, and for t' intend⁶;
To learnē bookēs was all her liking,
How she in virtue might her life dispend.

And, shortly of this story for to treat,
So doughty was her husband and eke she,
That they conquered many regnēs great
In th' Orient, with many a fair city
Appertinent unto the majesty
Of Rome, and with strong handē held them fast,
Nor ever might their foemen do⁷ them flee,
Aye while that Odenatus' dayēs last'.

Her battles, whoso list them for to read,
Against Sapor the king,⁸ and other mo',
And how that all this process fell in deed,
Why she conquer'd, and what title thereto,
And after of her mischief⁹ and her woe,
How that she was besieged and y-take,
Let him unto my master Petrarch go,
That writes enough of this, I undertake.

When Odenate was dead, she mightily
The regnē held, and with her proper hand
Against her foes she fought so cruelly,
That there n'as¹⁰ king nor prince in all that land,

That was not glad, if he that gracē fand
That she would not upon his land warray;¹¹
With her they maden alliaunce by bond,
To be in peace, and let her ride and play.

The emperor of Romē, Claudius,
Nor, him before, the Roman Gallien,
Durstē never be so courageōus,
Nor no Armenian, nor Egyptien,
Nor Syrian, nor no Arabien,
Within the fieldē durstē with her fight,
Lest that she would them with her handēs slēn,¹²
Or with her meinie¹³ puttē them to flight.

In kingēs' habit went her sonēs two,
As heirēs of their father's regnēs all;
And Herēmanno and Timolaō
Their namēs were, as Persians them call.
But aye Fortune hath in her honey gall;
This mighty queenē may no while endure;
Fortune out of her regnē made her fall
To wretchedness and to misadventure.

¹ Bountiful with due moderation. ⁸ Laborious.

³ Plate; French, "vaiselle."

⁴ Precious stones.

⁵ Did not neglect.

⁶ Apply.

⁷ Make.

⁸ Of Persia, who made the Emperor Valerian prisoner, conquered Syria, and was pressing triumphantly westward, when he was met and defeated by Odenatus and Zenobia.

⁹ Misfortune.

¹⁰ Was not.

¹¹ Make war.

¹² Slay.

¹³ Troops.

¹⁴ In A.D. 270.

¹⁵ Resolved, prepared.

¹⁶ Took.

¹⁷ According to.

¹⁸ Loaded.

Aurelian, when that the governānce
Of Romē came into his handēs tway,¹⁴
He shope¹⁵ upon this queen to do vengeance;
And with his legiōns he took his way
Toward Zenobie, and, shortly for to say,
He made her flee, and at the last her hent,¹⁶
And fetter'd her, and eke her children tway,
And won the land, and home to Rome he went.

Amongēs other thingēs that he wan,
Her car, that was with gold wrought and pierrie,
This greatē Roman, this Aurelian
Hath with him led, for that men should it see.
Before in his triumphē walked she
With giltē chains upon her neck hanging;
Crowned she was, as after¹⁷ her degree,
And full of pierrie charged¹⁸ her clothing.

Alas, Fortūnē! she that whilom was
Dreadful to kingēs and to emperōurs,
Now galeth¹⁹ all the people on her, alas!
And she that helmed was in starkē stowres,²⁰
And won by forcē townēs strong and tow'rs,
Shall on her head now wear a vitremite;²¹
And she that bare the sceptre full of flow'rs
Shall bear a distaff, her cost for to quite.²²

Although that Nero were as vicious
As any fiend that lies full low adown,
Yet he, as telleth us Suetonius,²³
This widē world had in subjection,
Both East and West, South and Septentrion.
Of rubies, sapphires, and of pearlēs white
Were all his clothes embroider'd up and down,
For he in gemmēs greatly gan delight.

More delicate, more pompous of array,
More proud, was never emperor than he;
That ilkē cloth²⁴ that he had worn one day,
After that time he would it never see;
Nettēs of gold thread had he great plenty,
To fish in Tiber, when him list to play;
His lustēs were as law, in his degree,
For Fortune as his friend would him obey.

He Romē burnt for his delicacy;²⁵
The senators he slew upon a day,
To hearē how that men would weep and cry;
And slew his brother, and by his sister lay.
His mother made he in piteous array;
For he her wombē alittē, to behold
Where he conceived was; so well-away!
That he so little of his mother told.²⁶

No tear out of his eyen for that sight
Came; but he said, a fair woman was she.
Great wonder is, how that he could or might
Be doomēsman²⁷ of her deadē beauty:
The wine to bringē him commanded he,
And drank anon; none other woe he made.

¹⁹ Yelleth, shouteth.

²⁰ Wore helmet in obstinate battles.

²¹ The signification of this word, which is spelled in several ways, is not known. Skinner's explanation, "another attire," founded on the spelling "autremite," is obviously insufficient.

²² To spin for her maintenance.

²³ Great part of this "tragedy" of Nero is really borrowed, however, from the "Romance of the Rose."

²⁴ Same robe.

²⁵ Pleasure.

²⁶ So little valued.

²⁷ Judge, critic.

When might is joined unto cruelty,
Alas! too deepē will the venom wade.

In youth a master had this emperour,
To teachē him lettrure¹ and courtesy;
For of morality he was the flow'r,
As in his timē, but if² bookēs lie.
And while this master had of him mast'ry,
He madē him so conning and so souple,³
That longē time it was ere tyrannē,
Or any vicē, durst in him uncouple.⁴

This Seneca, of which that I devise,⁵
Because Nero had of him suchē dread,
For he from vices would him aye chastise
Discreetly, as by word, and not by deed;
"Sir," he would say, "an emperor must need
Be virtuous, and hatē tyranny."
For which he made him in a bath to bleed
On both his armēs, till he mustē die.

This Nero had eke of a custumance⁶
In youth against his master for to rise;⁷
Which afterward he thought a great grievānce;
Therefore he made him dien in this wise.
But natheless this Seneca the wise
Chose in a bath to die in this mannēre,
Rather than have another tormentise;⁸
And thus hath Nero slain his master dear.

Now fell it so, that Fortune list no longer
The highē pride of Nero to cherice;⁹
For though he werē strong, yet was she stronger.
She thoughtē thus; "By God, I am too nice¹⁰
To set a man, that is full fill'd of vice,
In high degree, and emperor him call!
By God, out of his seat I will him trice!¹¹
When he least weeneth,¹² soonest shall he fall."

The people rose upon him on a night,
For his default; and when he it espied,
Out of his doors anon he hath him dight¹³
Alone, and where he ween'd t' have been allied,¹⁴
He knocked fast, and aye the more he cried
The faster shuttē they their doorēs all;
Then wist he well he had himself misgied,¹⁵
And went his way, no longer durst he call.

The people cried and rumbled up and down,
That with his earēs heard he how they said;
"Where is this falsē tyrant, this Neroūn?"
For fear almost out of his wit he braid,¹⁶
And to his goddēs piteously he pray'd
For succour, but it mightē not betide;
For dread of this he thoughtē that he died,
And ran into a garden him to hide.

And in this garden found he churlēs tway,
That sattē by a firē great and red;
And to these churlēs two he gan to pray
To slay him, and to girden¹⁷ off his head,
That to his body, when that he were dead,

¹ Learning, letters.

² Unless.

³ So intelligent and pliable.

⁴ Let itself loose, like a hound released from the leash.

⁵ Tell.

⁶ Habit.

⁷ To rise up in his master's presence, out of respect.

⁸ Torture.

⁹ Cherish.

¹⁰ Foolish.

¹¹ Thrust; from Anglo-Saxon, "thriccan."

¹² Expecteth.

¹³ Betaken himself.

¹⁴ Regarded with friendship.

¹⁵ Misguided, misled.

¹⁶ Went.

¹⁷ Strike.

¹⁸ Infamy.

¹⁹ He knew no better counsel; there was no other resource.

Were no despitē done for his defame.¹⁸
Himself he slew, he coud no better rede;¹⁹
Of which Fortūnē laugh'd and haddē game.²⁰

Was never capitain under a king,
That regnēs more put in subjection,
Nor stronger was in field of allē thing
As in his time, nor greater of renown,
Nor more pompous in high presumption,
Than HOLOFERNES, whom Fortūne aye kiss'd
So lik'rously, and led him up and down,
Till that his head was off ere that he wist.

Not only that this world had of him awe,
For losing of richēs and liberty;
But he made every man reny his law.²¹
Nabuchodónosór was God, said he;
None other Goddē should honoured be.
Against his hest²² there dare no wight trespass,
Save in Bethulia, a strong city,
Where Eliáchim priest was of that place.

But take keep²³ of the death of Holofern;
Amid his host he drunken lay at night
Within his tentē, large as is a bern;²⁴
And yet, for all his pomp and all his might,
Judith, a woman, as he lay upright
Sleeping, his head off smote, and from his tent
Full privily she stole from every wight,
And with his head unto her town she went.

What needeth it of king ANTIOCHUS²⁵
To tell his high and royal majesty,
His great pride, and his workēs venomous?
For such another was there none as he;
Readē what that he was in Maccabee.
And read the proudē wordēs that he said,
And why he fell from his prosperity,
And in an hill how wretchedly he died.

Fortūne him had enhanced so in pride,
That verily he ween'd he might attain
Unto the starrēs upon every side,
And in a balance weighen each mountáin,
And all the floodēs of the sea restrain.
And Goddē's people had he most in hate;
Them would he slay in torment and in pain,
Weening that God might not his pride abate.

And for that Nicanor and Timothee
With Jewēs werē vanquish'd mightily,²⁶
Unto the Jewēs such an hate had he,
That he bade graith his car²⁷ full hastily,
And swore and saidē full dispiteously,
Unto Jerusalem he would eftsoon,²⁸
To wreak his ire on it full cruelly;
But of his purpose was he let²⁹ full soon.

God for his menace him so sorē smote,
With invisible wound incurable,
That in his guttēs carf it so and bote,³⁰

²⁰ Made merry, was amused by the sport.

²¹ Renounce his religion; so, in the Man of Law's Tale, the Sultanness promises her son that she will "reny her lay;" see page 64.

²² Commandment.

²³ Notice.

²⁴ Barn.

²⁵ As the "tragedy" of Holofernes is founded on the Book of Judith, so is that of Antiochus on the Second Book of the Maccabees, chap. ix.

²⁶ By the insurgents under the leadership of Judas Maccabeus; 2 Macc. chap. viii.

²⁷ Prepare his chariot.

²⁸ Immediately.

²⁹ Prevented.

³⁰ It so cut and gnawed in his entrails.

Till that his painës were importable;¹
 And certainly the wreche² was reasonable,
 For many a mannë's guttës did he pain;
 But from his purpose, curs'd³ and damnable,
 For all his smart he would him not restrain;

But bade anon apparailë⁴ his host.
 And suddenly, ere he was of it ware,
 God daunted all his pride, and all his boast;
 For he so sorë fell out of his chare,⁵
 That it his limbës and his skin to-tare,
 So that he neither mightë go nor ride;
 But in a chairë men about him bare,
 Allë forbruised bothë back and side.

The wreche² of God him smote so cruelly,
 That through his body wicked wormës crept,
 And therewithal he stank so horribly
 That none of all his meinie⁶ that him kept,
 Whether so that he woke or ellës slept,
 Ne mightë not of him the stink endure.
 In this mischief he wailed and eke wept,
 And knew God Lord of every creatüre.

To all his host, and to himself also,
 Full wlatom⁷ was the stink of his carrain;⁸
 No mannë might him bearë to and fro.
 And in this stink, and this horrible pain,
 He starf⁹ full wretchedly in a mountáin.
 Thus hath this robber, and this homicide,
 That many a mannë made to weep and plain,
 Such guerdon¹⁰ as belongeth unto pride.

The story of ALEXANDER is so commúne,
 That ev'ry wight that hath discretioún
 Hath heard somewhat or all of his fortune.
 This widë world, as in conclusioún,¹¹
 He won by strength; or, for his high renown,
 They werë glad for peace to him to send.
 The pride and boast of man he laid adown,
 Whereso he came, unto the worldë's end.

Comparison yet¹² never might be maked
 Between him and another conqueroúr;
 For all this world for dread of him had quaked;
 He was of knighthood and of freedom flow'r:
 Fortune him made the heir of her honour.
 Save wine and women, nothing might assuage
 His high intent in armës and labour,
 So was he full of leonine couráge.

What praise were it to him, though I you told
 Of Darius, and a hundred thousand mo',
 Of kingës, princes, dukes, and earlës bold,
 Which he conquer'd, and brought them into
 woe?

I say, as far as man may ride or go,
 The world was his, why should I more devise?¹³
 For, though I wrote or told you evermo',
 Of his knighthood it mightë not suffice.

Twelve years he reigned, as saith Maccabee;
 Philippë's son of Macedon he was,
 That first was king in Greecë the country.
 O worthy gentle¹⁴ Alexander, alas

1 Unendurable. 2 Vengeance. 3 Impious.
 4 Prepare. 5 Chariot. 6 Servants.
 7 Loathsome; from Anglo-Saxon, "wlatan," to
 loathe. 8 Body. 9 Died.
 10 Recompense. 11 To sum up his career.
 12 Moreover. 13 Tell. 14 Noble.
 15 The highest cast on a dicing-cube; here represent-
 ing the highest favour of fortune. 16 Generosity.

That ever should thee fallë such a case!
 Empoison'd of thine owen folk thou were;
 Thy six¹⁵ Fortune hath turn'd into an ace,
 And yet for thee she weptë never a tear.

Who shall me givë tearës to complain
 The death of gentilës, and of franchise,¹⁶
 That all this worldë had in his demaine,¹⁷
 And yet he thought it mightë not suffice,
 So full was his coráge¹⁸ of high emprise?
 Alas! who shall me helpë to indite
 Falsë Fortune, and poison to despise?
 The whichë two of all this woe I wite.¹⁹

By wisdom, manhood, and by great labour,
 From humbleness to royal majesty
 Up rose he, JULIUS the Conqueroúr,
 That won all th' Occident,²⁰ by land and sea,
 By strength of hand or ellës by treaty,
 And unto Romë made them tributáry;
 And since²¹ of Rome the emperor was he,
 Till that Fortunë wax'd his adversáry.

O mighty Cæsar, that in Thessaly
 Against POMPEIUS, father thine in law,²²
 That of th' Oriënt had all the chivalry,
 As far as that the day begins to daw,
 That through thy knighthood hast them take
 and slaw,²³
 Save fewë folk that with Pompeius fled;
 Through which thou put all th' Orient in awe;
 Thankë Fortunë that so well thee sped.

But now a little while I will bewail
 This Pompeius, this noble governór
 Of Romë, which that fled at this bataille;
 I say, one of his men, a false traitór,
 His head off smote, to winnë him favór
 Of Julius, and him the head he brought;
 Alas! Pompey, of th' Orient conquerór,
 That Fortune unto such a fine²⁴ thee brought!

To Rome again repaired Julius,
 With his triumphë laureate full high;
 But on a time Brutus and Cassius,
 That ever had of his estate envý,
 Full privily have made conspiracy
 Against this Julius in subtle wise;
 And cast²⁵ the place in which he shouldë die,
 With bodëkins,²⁶ as I shall you devise.²⁷

This Julius to the Capitólë went
 Upon a day, as he was wont to gon;
 And in the Capitol anon him hent²⁸
 This falsë Brutus, and his other fone,
 And sticked him with bodëkins anon
 With many a wound, and thus they let him lie.
 But never groan'd he at no stroke but one,
 Or else at two, but if²⁹ the story lie.

So manly was this Julius of heart,
 And so well lov'd estatefully honesty,³⁰
 That, though his deadly woundës sorë smert,³¹
 His mantle o'er his hippës castë he,
 That no man shouldë see his privity -

17 Government, dominion. 18 Spirit.
 19 Blame. 20 West. 21 Afterwards.
 22 He had married his daughter Julia to Cæsar; but
 she died six years before Pompey's final overthrow.
 23 Slain; at the battle of Pharsalia, A.D. 48.
 24 End. 25 Arranged. 26 Daggers.
 27 Relate. 28 Assailed. 29 Unless.
 30 Dignified propriety. 31 Pained him.

And as he lay a-dying in a trance,
And wist¹ verily that dead was he,
Of honesty yet had he remembrance.

Lucan, to thee this story I recommend,
And to Sueton', and Valerie also,
That of this story writ² word and end;¹
How that to these great conquerors two
Fortune was first a friend, and since² a foe.
No mann³ trust upon her favour long,
But have her in await³ for evermo';
Witness on all these conquerors strong.

The rich⁴ CROESUS, whilom king of Lyde,—
Of which Croesus Cyrus him sor⁵ drad,⁴—
Yet was he caught amidd⁵ all his pride,
And to be burnt men to the fire him lad;⁵
But such a rain down from the welkin shad,⁶
That slew the fire, and made him to escape:
But to beware no grac⁶ yet he had,
Till fortune on the gallows made him gape.

When he escaped was, he could not stint⁷
For to begin a new⁸ war again;
He weened well, for⁸ that Fortune him sent
Such hap, that he escaped through the rain,
That of his foes he might⁸ not be slain.
And eke a sweven⁹ on a night he mette,¹⁰
Of which he was so proud, and eke so fain,¹¹
That he in vengeance all his heart¹¹ set.

Upon a tree he was set, as he thought,
Where Jupiter him wash'd, both back and side,
And Phoebus eke a fair towel him brought
To dry him with; and therefore wax'd his pride.
And to his daughter that stood him beside,
Which he knew in high science to abound,
He bade her tell him what it signified;
And she his dream began right thus expound.

"The tree," quoth she, "the gallows is to
mean,
And Jupiter betokens snow and rain,
And Phoebus, with his towel clear and clean,
Those be the sunn¹²'s stream¹²s, sooth to sayn;
Thou shalt y-hanged be, father, certain;
Rain shall thee wash, and sunn¹² shall thee dry."
Thus warned him full plat and eke full plain
His daughter, which that called was Phanie.

¹ Apparently a corruption of the Anglo-Saxon phrase, "ord and end," meaning the whole, the beginning and the end.

² Afterwards.

³ Ever be watchful against her.

⁴ At the opening of the story of Croesus, Chaucer has copied from his own translation of Boethius; but the story is mainly taken from the "Romance of the Rose."

⁵ Led.

⁶ Shed, poured.

⁷ Refrain.

⁸ Because.

⁹ Dream.

¹⁰ Dreamed.

¹¹ Glad.

¹² Rays.

¹³ Kingdoms. "This reflection," says Tyrwhitt, "seems to have been suggested by one which follows soon after the mention of Croesus in the passage just cited from Boethius. 'What other thing bewail the cryings of tragedies but only the deeds of fortune, that with an awkward stroke overturneth the realms of great nobility?'—In some manuscripts, the four "tragedies" that follow are placed between those of Zenobia and Nero; but although the general reflection with which the "tragedy" of Croesus closes might most appropriately wind up the whole series, the general chronological arrangement which is observed in the other cases, recommends the order followed in the text. Besides, since, like several other Tales, the Monk's tragedies were cut short by the impatience of the auditors, it is more natural that the Tale should close abruptly, than by such a rhetorical finish as these lines afford.

And hanged was Croesus the proud¹⁴ king;¹
His royal thron¹⁴ might him not avail.
Tragedy is none other manner thing,
Nor can in singing crie¹⁴ nor bewail,
But for that Fortune all day will assail
With unware stroke the regn¹⁴s¹⁵ that be proud:
For when men trust¹⁴ her, then will she fail,
And cover her bright fac¹⁴ with a cloud.

O noble, O worthy PEDRO,¹⁴ glory OF SPAIN,
Whom Fortune held so high in majesty,
Well ought¹⁴ men thy piteous death complain.
Out of thy land thy brother made thee flee,
And after, at a siege, by subtlety,
Thou wert betray'd, and led unto his tent,
Where as he with his owen hand slew thee,
Succeeding in thy regne and in thy rent.¹⁵

The field of snow, with th' eagle of black
therein,
Caught with the lion, red-colour'd as the glede,¹⁶
He brew'd this cursedness,¹⁷ and all this sin;
The wicked nest was worker of this deed;
Not Charl¹⁸'s Oliver,¹⁸ that took aye heed
Of truth and honour, but of Armorike
Ganilion Oliver, corrupt for meed,
Brought¹⁸ this worthy king in such a brike.¹⁹

O worthy PETRO, King OF CYPRE,²⁰ also,
That Alisandre won by high mast'ry,
Full many a heathen wroughtest thou full woe,
Of which thine owen lieges had env²¹;
And, for no thing but for thy chivalry,
They in thy bed have slain thee by the mor-
row;
Thus can Fortune her wheel gov²¹ern and gie,²¹
And out of joy bring²¹ men into sorrow.

Of Milan great²² BARNABO VISCONTI,
God of delight, and scourge of Lombardy,
Why should I not thine infortune account,²²
Since in estate thou clomben wert so high?
Thy brother's son, that was thy double ally,
For he thy nephew was and son-in-law,
Within his prison mad²² thee to die,
But why, nor how, n'ot²³ I that thou were
slaw.²⁴

¹⁴ Pedro the Cruel, King of Aragon, against whom his brother Henry rebelled. He was by false pretences inveigled into his brother's tent, and treacherously slain. Mr Wright has remarked that "the cause of Pedro, though he was no better than a cruel and reckless tyrant, was popular in England from the very circumstance that Prince Edward (the Black Prince) had embarked in it."

¹⁵ Thy kingdom and revenues.

¹⁶ Burning coal.

¹⁷ Wickedness, villainy.

¹⁸ Not the Oliver of Charlemagne—but a traitorous Oliver of Armorica, corrupted by a bribe. Ganilion was the betrayer of the Christian army at Roncesvalles (see note 29, p. 141); and his name appears to have been for a long time used in France to denote a traitor. Duguesclin, who betrayed Pedro into his brother's tent, seems to be intended by the term "Ganilion Oliver," but if so, Chaucer has mistaken his name, which was Bertrand—perhaps confounding him, as Tyrwhitt suggests, with Oliver de Clisson, another illustrious Breton of those times, who was also Constable of France, after Duguesclin. The arms of the latter are supposed to be described a little above.

¹⁹ Breach, ruin.

²⁰ Pierre de Lusignan, King of Cyprus, who captured Alexandria in 1365 (see note 14, p. 17). He was assassinated in 1369.

²¹ Guide.

²² Reckon.

²³ Know not.

²⁴ Bernabo Visconti, Duke of Milan, was deposed and

Of th' Earl HUGOLIN OF PISE the languour¹
 There may no tonguë tellë for pity.
 But little out of Pisa stands a tow'r,
 In whichë tow'r in prison put was he,
 And with him be his little children three;
 The eldest scarcely five years was of age;
 Alas! Fortune, it was great cruelty
 Such birdës for to put in such a cage.

Damned was he to die in that prisón;
 For Roger, which that bishop was of Pise,
 Had on him made a false suggestiön,
 Through which the people gan upon him rise,
 And put him in prisón, in such a wise
 As ye have heard; and meat and drink he had
 So small, that well unneth² it might suffice,
 And therewithal it was full poor and bad.

And on a day befell, that in that hour
 When that his meatë wont was to be brought,
 The jailor shut the doorës of the tow'r;
 He heard it right well, but he spakë nought.
 And in his heart anon there fell a thought,
 That they for hunger wouldë do him dien;³
 "Alas!" quoth he, "alas that I was wrought!"⁴
 Therewith the tearës fellë from his eyen.

His youngest son, that three years was of age,
 Unto him said, "Father, why do ye weep?
 When will the jailor bringen our pottäge?
 Is there no morsel bread that ye do keep?
 I am so hungry, that I may not sleep.
 Now wouldë God that I might sleepen ever!
 Then should not hunger in my wombë creep;
 There is no thing, save bread, that me were
 lever."⁵

Thus day by day this child began to cry,
 Till in his father's barme⁶ adown he lay,
 And saidë, "Farewell, father, I must die;"
 And kiss'd his father, and died the samë day.
 And when the woeful father did it sey,⁷
 For woe his armës two he gan to bite,
 And said, "Alas! Fortune, and well-away!
 To thy false wheel my woe all may I wite."⁸

His children ween'd⁹ that it for hunger was
 That he his armës gnaw'd, and not for woe,
 And saidë, "Father, do not so, alas!
 But rather eat the flesh upon us two.
 Our flesh thou gave us, our flesh take us fro',
 And eat enough;" right thus they to him
 said.

And after that, within a day or two,
 They laid them in his lap adown, and died.

Himself, despaired, eke for hunger starf.¹⁰
 Thus ended is this mighty Earl of Pise;
 From high estate Fortune away him carf.¹¹
 Of this tragëdy it ought enough suffice;
 Whoso will hear it in a longer wise,¹²
 Readë the greatë poet of Itäle,

imprisoned by his nephew, and died a captive in 1385.
 His death is the latest historical fact mentioned in the
 Tales; and thus it throws the date of their composition
 to about the sixtieth year of Chaucer's age.

¹ Agony.

³ Cause him to die.

⁵ Dearer.

⁸ Blame, impute.

¹⁰ Died.

¹² More at length.

⁶ Lap.

² With difficulty.

⁴ Made, born.

⁷ See.

⁹ Thought.

¹¹ Cut off.

That Dante hight, for he can it devise¹³
 From point to point, not one word will he fail.

THE NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.

"Ho!" quoth the Knight, "good sir, no more
 of this;

That ye have said is right enough, y-wis,¹⁴

And muchë more; for little heaviness

Is right enough to muchë folk, I guess.

I say for me, it is a great disease,¹⁵

Where as men have been in great wealth and
 ease,

To hearken of their sudden fall, alas!

And the contráry is joy and great solas,¹⁶

As when a man hath been in poor estate,

And climbeth up, and waxeth fortunate,

And there abideth in prosperity;

Such thing is gladsome, as it thinketh me,

And of such thing were goodly for to tell."

"Yea," quoth our Hostë, "by Saint Paul's
 bell,

Ye say right sooth; this monk hath clapped¹⁷
 loud;

He spake how Fortune cover'd with a cloud

I wot not what, and als' of a tragëdy

Right now ye heard: and pardie no remëdy

It is for to bewailë, nor complain

That that is done, and also it is pain,

As ye have said, to hear of heaviness.

Sir Monk, no more of this, so God you bless;

Your tale annoyeth all this company;

Such talking is not worth a butterfly,

For therein is there no disport nor game;

Therefore, Sir Monkë, Dan Piers by your name,

I pray you heart'ly, tell us somewhat else,

For sickerly, n'ere clinking of your bella,¹⁸

That on your bridle hang on every side,

By heaven's king, that for us allë died,

I should ere this have fallen down for sleep,

Although the slough had been never so deep;

Then had your talë been all told in vain.

For certainly, as thesë clerkës sayn,

Where as a man may have no audience,

Nought helpeth it to tellë his sentënce.

And well I wot the substance is in me,

If anything shall well reported be.

Sir, say somewhat of hunting,¹⁹ I you pray."

"Nay," quoth the Monk, "I have no lust to
 play;²⁰

Now let another tell, as I have told."

Then spake our Host with rudë speech and bold,

And said unto the Nunnë's Priest anon,

¹³ Relate. The story of Ugolino is told in the 33d
 canto of the "Inferno."

¹⁴ Of a surety.

¹⁵ Source of distress, annoyance.

¹⁶ Delight, comfort.

¹⁷ Talked.

¹⁸ Were it not for the jingling of your bridle-bells.
 See note 13, page 19.

¹⁹ The request is justified by the description of the
 Monk in the Prologue as "an out-rider, that loved
 venery;" see page 19.

²⁰ I have no fondness for jesting.

"Come near, thou Priest, come hither, thou
Sir John,¹
Tell us such thing as may our heartës glade.²
Be blithe, although thou ride upon a jade.
What though thine horse be bothë foul and
lean?
If he will serve thee, reck thou not a bean;
Look that thine heart be merry evermo'."
"Yes, Host," quoth he, "so may I ride or go,
But³ I be merry, y-wis I will be blamed."
And right anon his tale he hath attamed;⁴
And thus he said unto us every one,
This sweetë priest, this goodly man, Sir John.

THE TALE.⁵

A poor widow, somedeal y-stept⁶ in age,
Was whilom dwelling in a poor cottäge,
Beside a grovë, standing in a dale.
This widow, of which I tellë you my tale,
Since thilkë day that she was last a wife,
In patiënce led a full simple life,
For little was her chattel and her rent.⁷
By husbandry⁸ of such as God her sent,
She found⁹ herself, and eke her daughters two.
Three largë sowës had she, and no mo';
Three kine, and eke a sheep that hightë Mall.
Full sooty was her bow'r,¹⁰ and eke her hall,
In which she ate full many a slender meal.
Of poignant saucë knew she never a deal.¹¹
No dainty morsel passed through her throat;
Her diet was accordant to her cote.¹²
Repletiön her madë never sick;
Attemper¹³ diet was all her physíc,
And exercise, and heartë's suffisance.¹⁴
The goutë let her nothing¹⁵ for to dance,
Nor apoplexy shentë¹⁶ not her head.
No winë drank she, neither white nor red:
Her board was served most with white and
black,
Milk and brown bread, in which she found no
lack,
Seind¹⁷ bacon, and sometimes an egg or tway;
For she was as it were a manner dey.¹⁸
A yard¹⁹ she had, enclosed all about

With stickës, and a dryë ditch without,
In which she had a cock, hight Chanticleer;
In all the land of crowing n'as²⁰ his peer.²¹
His voice was merrier than the merry orgön,²²
On massë days that in the churches gon.
Well sickerer²³ was his crowing in his lodge,
Than is a clock, or an abbáy horloge.²⁴
By nature he knew each ascensioün
Of th' equinoctial in thilkë town;
For when degrees fifteenë were ascended,
Then crew he, that it might not be amended.
His comb was redder than the fine corál,
Embattell'd²⁵ as it were a castle wall.
His bill was black, and as the jet it shone;
Like azure were his leggës and his tone;²⁶
His nailës whiter than the lily flow'r,
And like the burnish'd gold was his colóur.
This gentle cock had in his governánce
Sev'n hennës, for to do all his pleasánce,
Which were his sisters and his paramours,
And wondrous like to him as of colóurs.
Of which the fairest-hued in the throat
Was called Damosellë Partelote.
Courteous she was, discreet, and debonair,
And cómpañiáble,²⁷ and bare herself so fair,
Sincë the day that she sev'n night was old,
That truëly she had the heart in hold
Of Chanticleer, locked in every lith;²⁸
He lov'd her so, that well was him therewith.
But such a joy it was to hear them sing,
When that the brightë sunnë gan to spring,
In sweet accord, "My lefe²⁹ is fare³⁰ in land."³¹
For at that time, as I have understand,
Beastës and birdës couldë speak and sing.

And so befell, that in a dawëning,
As Chanticleer among his wivës all
Sat on his perchë, that was in the hall,
And next him sat this fairë Partelote,
This Chanticleer gan groanen in his throat,
As man that in his dream is dretched³² sore.
And when that Partelote thus heard him roar,
She was aghast,³³ and saidë, "Heartë dear,
What aileth you to groan in this mannëre?
Ye be a very sleeper, fy for shame!"
And he answe'r'd and saidë thus; "Madame,
I pray you that ye take it not agrief;³⁴

¹ On this Tyrwhitt remarks: "I know not how it has happened, that in the principal modern languages, John, or its equivalent, is a name of contempt, or at least of slight. So the Italians use 'Glanni,' from whence 'Zani;' the Spaniards 'Juan,' as 'Bobo Juan,' a foolish John; the French 'Jean,' with various additions; and in English, when we call a man 'a John,' we do not mean it as a title of honour." The title of "Sir" was usually given by courtesy to priests.

² Gladden.

³ Unless.

⁴ Commenced, broached. Compare French, "entamer," to cut the first piece off a joint; thence to begin.

⁵ The Tale of the Nun's Priest is founded on the fifth chapter of an old French metrical "Romance of Renard;" the same story forming one of the Fables of Marie, the translator of the Breton Lays. (See note 11, page 122.) Although Dryden was in error when he ascribed the Tale to Chaucer's own invention, still the materials on which he had to operate were out of comparison more trivial than the result.

⁶ Somewhat advanced.

⁷ Her goods and her income.

⁸ Thrifty management.

⁹ Chamber.

¹⁰ In keeping with her cottage.

¹¹ Contentment of heart.

¹² Maintained.

¹³ Whit.

¹⁴ Moderate.

¹⁵ No wise prevented her.

¹⁶ Hurt, destroyed.

¹⁷ Singed.

¹⁸ Kind of day labourer. Tyrwhitt quotes two statutes of Edward III., in which "deys" are included among the servants employed in agricultural pursuits; the name seems to have originally meant a servant who gave his labour by the day, but afterwards to have been appropriated exclusively to one who superintended or worked in a dairy.

¹⁹ Court-yard, farm-yard.

²⁰ Was not.

²¹ Equal.

²² Licentiously used for the plural, "organs" or "orgons," corresponding to the plural verb "gon" in the next line.

²³ More punctual. ²⁴ Clock; French, "horloge."

²⁵ Indented on the upper edge like the battlements of a castle.

²⁶ Toes.

²⁷ Sociable.

²⁸ Limb.

²⁹ Love.

³⁰ Gone.

³¹ This seems to have been the refrain of some old song, and its precise meaning is uncertain. It corresponds in cadence with the morning salutation of the cock; and may be taken as a greeting to the sun, which is beloved of Chanticleer, and has just come upon the earth—or in the sense of a more local boast, as vaunting the fairness of his favourite hen above all others in the country round.

³² Oppressed.

³³ Afraid.

³⁴ Amiss, in umbrage.

By God, me mette¹ I was in such mischief,²
Right now, that yet mine heart is sore affright'.
Now God," quoth he, "my sweven³ read
aright,

And keep my body out of foul prisoun.
Me mette,¹ how that I roamed up and down
Within our yard, where as I saw a beast
Was like an hound, and would have made
arrest⁴

Upon my body, and would have had me dead.
His colour was betwixt yellow and red;
And tipped was his tail, and both his ears,
With black, unlike the remnant of his hairs.
His snout was small, with glowing eyen tway;
Yet of his look almost for fear I dey;⁵
This caused me my groaning doubtless."

"Away,"⁶ quoth she, "fy on you, heartless!⁷

Alas!" quoth she, "for, by that God above!
Now have ye lost my heart and all my love;
I cannot love a coward, by my faith.
For certes, what so any woman saith,
We all desiren, if it mighte be,
To have husbandes hardy, wise, and free,
And secret, and no niggard nor no fool,
Nor him that is aghast⁸ of every tool,⁹
Nor no avantour,¹⁰ by that God above!
How durste ye for shame say to your love
That anything might make you afear'd?
Have ye no mannē's heart, and have a beard?
Alas! and can ye be aghast of swevenes?¹¹
Nothing but vanity, God wot, in sweven is.
Swevens engender of¹² repletions,
And oft of fume, and of complexions,
When humours be too abundant in a wight.
Certes this dream, which ye have mette to-
night,

Cometh of the great superfluity
Of yourē redē *cholera*,¹³ pardie,
Which causeth folk to dreaden in their dreams
Of arrows, and of fire with redē beams,
Of redē beastēs, that they will them bite,
Of conteke,¹⁴ and of whelpēs great and lite;¹⁵
Right as the humour of melāncholy
Causeth full many a man in sleep to cry,
For fear of bullēs, or of bearēs blake,
Or ellēs that black devils will them take.
Of other humours could I tell also,
That workē many a man in sleep much woe;
But I will pass as lightly as I can.
Lo Cato, which that was so wise a man,
Said he not thus, 'Ne do no force of¹⁶ dreams.'
Now, Sir," quoth she, "when we fly from these
beams,¹⁷

For Goddē's love, as take some laxatife;

¹ I dreamed.

² Peril, trouble.

³ Dream, vision.

⁴ Seizure.

⁵ Die.

⁶ "Avoi!" is the word here rendered "away!" It was frequently used in the French fabliaux, and the Italians employ the word "via!" in the same sense.

⁷ Coward.

⁸ Frightened.

⁹ Rag, clout, trifle.

¹⁰ Braggart.

¹¹ Dreams.

¹² Are produced by.

¹³ Cholera, bile.

¹⁴ Contention.

¹⁵ Little.

¹⁶ Attach no consequence to; "Somnia ne cures," Cato "De Moribus," l. ii. dist. 32.

¹⁷ The rafters of the hall, on which they were perched.

¹⁸ Profit, advantage.

¹⁹ Nature.

²⁰ The herb so called because by its virtue the Cen-

On peril of my soul, and of my life,
I counsel you the best, I will not lie,
That both of choler, and melāncholy,
Ye purgē you; and, for ye shall not tarry,
Though in this town is no apothecary,
I shall myself two herbēs teachē you,
That shall be for your health, and for your
prow;¹⁸

And in our yard the herbēs shall I find,
The which have of their property by kind¹⁹
To purgē you beneath, and eke above.
Sirē, forget not this, for Goddē's love;
Ye be full choleric of complexiōn;
Ware that the sun, in his ascensiōn,
You findē not replete of humours hot;
And if it do, I dare well lay a groat,
That ye shall have a fever tertiane,
Or else an ague, that may be your bane.
A day or two ye shall have digestives
Of wormēs, ere ye take your laxatives,
Of laurel, centaury,²⁰ and fumetere,²¹
Or else of elder-berry, that groweth there,
Of catapuce,²² or of the gaitre-berries,²³
Or herb ivy growing in our yard, that merry is:
Pick them right as they grow, and eat them in.
Be merry, husband, for your father's kin;
Dreadē no dream; I can say you no more."

"Madame," quoth he, "grand mercy of your
lore.

But natheless, as touching Dan Catoūn,
That hath of wisdom such a great renown,
Though that he bade no dreamēs for to dread,
By God, men may in oldē bookēs read
Of many a man more of authority
Than ever Cato was, so may I thé,²⁴
That all the reversē say of his sentēce,²⁵
And have well founden by experience
That dreamēs be signifiatiōns
As well of joy, as tribulatiōns
That folk enduren in this life present.
There needeth make of this no argument;
The very prevē²⁶ sheweth it indeed.
One of the greatest authors that men read²⁷
Saith thus, that whilom two fellōwēs went
On pilgrimage in a full good intent;
And happen'd so, they came into a town
Where there was such a congregatiōn
Of people, and eke so strait of herbergage,²⁸
That they found not as much as one cottāge
In which they bothē might y-lodged be:
Wherefore they musten of necessity,
As for that night, departē company;
And each of them went to his hostelry,²⁹
And took his lodging as it wouldē fall.
The one of them was lodged in a stall,

taur Chiron was healed when the poisoned arrow of Hercules had accidentally wounded his foot.

²¹ The herb "fumitory."

²² Spurge; a plant of purgative qualities. To its name in the text correspond the Italian "catapuzza," and French "catapuce"—words the origin of which is connected with the effects of the plant.

²³ Dog-wood berries.

²⁴ Thrive.

²⁵ Opinion.

²⁶ Trial, experience.

²⁷ Cicero, who in his book "De Divinatione" tells this and the following story, though in contrary order and with many differences.

²⁸ Lodging.

²⁹ Inn.

Far in a yard, with oxen of the plough;
That other man was lodged well enow,
As was his aventure, or his fortune,
That us govérneth all, as in commúne.
And so befell, that, long ere it were day,
This man mette¹ in his bed, there as he lay,
How that his fellow gan upon him call,
And said, 'Alas! for in an ox's stall
This night shall I be murder'd, where I lie.
Now help me, dearð brother, or I die;
In allð hastð come to me,' he said.
This man out of his sleep for fear abraid;²
But when that he was wak'd out of his sleep,
He turned him, and took of this no keep;
He thought his dream was but a vanity.
Thus twiðs in his sleeping dreamed he.
And at the thirðð time yet³ his felláw
Came, as he thought, and said, 'I am now
slaw;⁴

Behold my bloody woundðs, deep and wide.
Ariðs up early, in the morning tide,
And at the west gate of the town,' quoth he,
'A cartð full of dung there shalt thou see,
In which my body is hid privily.
Do thilkð cart arrestð⁵ boldðly.
My gold caused my murder, sooth to sayn.'
And told him every point how he was slain,
With a full piteous face, and pale of hue.

"And, trustð well, his dream he found full
true;

For on the morrow, as soon as it was day,
To his fellówð's inn he took his way;
And when that he came to this ox's stall,
After his fellow he began to call.
The hostelère answered him anon,
And saidð, 'Sir, your fellow is y-gone,
As soon as day he went out of the town.'
This man gan fallen in suspicióun,
Rememb'ring on his dreamðs that he mette,¹
And forth he went, no longer would he let,²
Unto the west gate of the town, and fand
A dung cart, as it went for to dung land,
That was arrayed in the samð wise
As ye have heard the deadð man devise;⁷
And with an hardy heart he gan to cry,
'Vengeance and justice of this felony:
My fellow murder'd is this samð night,
And in this cart he lies, gaping upright.
I cry out on the ministers,' quoth he,
'That shouldð keep and rulð this city;
Harow! alas! here lies my fellow slain.'
What should I more unto this talð sayn?
The people out start, and cast the cart to ground,
And in the middle of the dung they found
The deadð man, that murder'd was all new.
O blissful God! that art so good and true,
Lo, how that thou bewray'st murder alway.
Murder will out, that see we day by day.
Murder is so wlatom⁸ and abominable

To God, that is so just and reasonable,
That he will not suffer it heled⁹ be;
Though it abide a year, or two, or three,
Murder will out, this is my conclusiún.
And right anon, the ministers of the town
Have hent¹⁰ the carter, and so sore him pined,¹¹
And eke the hostelère so sore engined,¹²
That they beknew¹³ their wickedness anon,
And werð hanged by the neckð bone.

"Here may ye see that dreamðs be to dread.
And certes in the samð book I read,
Right in the nextð chapter after this
(I gabbð¹⁴ not, so have I joy and bliss),
Two men that would have passed over sea,
For certain cause, into a far countrý,
If that the wind not haddð been contráry,
That made them in a city for to tarry,
That stood full merry upon an haven side;
But on a day, against the even-tide,
The wind gan change, and blew right as them
lest.¹⁵

Jolly and glad they wentð to their rest,
And castð¹⁶ them full early for to sail.
But to the one man fell a great marvail.
That one of them, in sleeping as he lay,
He mette¹ [a wondrous dream, against the
day:

He thought a man stood by his bedð's side,
And him commanded that he should abide;
And said him thus; 'If thou to-morrow wend,¹⁷
Thou shalt be drown'd; my tale is at an end.'
He woke, and told his fellow what he mette,
And prayed him his voyage for to let;¹⁸
As for that day, he pray'd him to abide.
His fellow, that lay by his bedð's side,
Gan for to laugh, and scorned him full fast.
'No dream,' quoth he, 'may so my heart aghast,¹⁹
That I will lettð for to do my things.²⁰
I settð not a straw by thy dreamings,
For swevens²¹ be but vanities and japes.²²
Men dream all day of owlðs and of apes,
And eke of many a mazð²³ therewithal;
Men dream of thing that never was, nor shall.
But since I see that thou wilt here abide,
And thus foralothð²⁴ wilfully thy tide,²⁵
God wot, it rueth me;²⁶ and have good day.'
And thus he took his leave, and went his way.
But, ere that he had half his coursð sail'd,
I know not why, nor what mischance it ail'd,
But casually²⁷ the ship's bottom rent,
And ship and man under the water went,
In sight of other shippðs there beside
That with him sailed at the samð tide.²⁸

"And therefore, fairð Partelote so dear,
By such examples oldð may'st thou lear,²⁹
That no man shouldð be too reckðless
Of dreamðs, for I say thee doubtðless,
That many a dream full sore is for to dread.
Lo, in the life of Saint Kenelm³⁰ I read,

1 Dreamed. 2 Awoke, started. 3 Again.
4 Slain. 5 Cause that cart to be stopped.
6 Delay. 7 Describe. 8 Loathsome.
9 Or hylled; from Anglo-Saxon, "helan;" hid, con-
cealed. 10 Seized.
11 Tortured. 12 Racked. 13 Confessed.
14 I am not prating idly, or lying.
15 As they wished. 16 Prepared, resolved.

17 Depart. 18 Delay. 19 Dismay.
20 Transact my business. 21 Dreams.
22 Tricks. 23 Incoherent, wild imagining.
24 Spend or lose in sloth, loiter away.
25 Time. 26 I am sorry for thee.
27 By an accident. 28 Learn.
29 Kenelm succeeded his father as king of the Saxon
realm of Mercia in 811, at the age of seven years;

That was Kenulphus' son, the noble king
 Of Mercenrike,¹ how Kenelm mette a thing.
 A little ere he was murder'd on a day,
 His murder in his visiön he say.²
 His norice³ him expounded every deal⁴
 His sweven, and bade him to keep⁵ him well
 For treason; but he was but seven years old,
 And therefore little talë hath he told⁶
 Of any dream, so holy was his heart.
 By God, I haddë lever than my shirt
 That ye had read his legend, as have I.
 Dame Partelote, I say you truëly,
 Macrobius, that wrote the visiön
 In Afric' of the worthy Scipion,⁷
 Affirmeth dreamës, and saith that they be
 Warnings of thingës that men after see.
 And furthermore, I pray you lookë well
 In the Old Testament, of Daniël,
 If he held dreamës any vanity.
 Read eke of Joseph, and there shall ye see
 Whether dreams be sometimes (I say not all)
 Warnings of thingës that shall after fall.
 Look of Egypt the king, Dan Pharaöh,
 His baker and his buteler also,
 Whether they feltë none effect⁸ in dreams.
 Whoso will seek the acts of sundry remes⁹
 May read of dreamës many a wondrous thing.
 Lo Cræsus, which that was of Lydia king,
 Mette he not that he sat upon a tree,
 Which signified he shouldë hanged be?¹⁰
 Lo here, Andromachë, Hectorë's wife,
 That day that Hector shouldë lose his life,
 She dreamed on the samë night befor,
 How that the life of Hector should be lorn,¹¹
 If thilkë day he went into battaile;
 She warned him, but it might not avail;
 He wentë forth to fightë natheless,
 And was y-slain anon of Achillës.
 But thilkë tale is all too long to tell;
 And eke it is nigh day, I may not dwell.
 Shortly I say, as for conclusiön,
 That I shall have of this avisiön
 Adversity; and I say furthermore,
 That I ne tell of laxatives no store,¹²
 For they be venomous, I wot it well;
 I them defy,¹³ I love them never a del.¹⁴

"But let us speak of mirth, and stint¹⁵ all
 this;

Madamë Partelote, so have I bliss,
 Of one thing God hath sent me largë¹⁶ grace;
 For when I see the beauty of your face,

but he was slain by his ambitious aunt Quendrada. The place of his burial was miraculously discovered, and he was subsequently elevated to the rank of a saint and martyr. His life is in the English "Golden Legend."

¹ The kingdom of Mercia; Anglo-Saxon, "Myrcna-
 rice. Compare the second member of the compound
 in the German, "Frankreich," France; "Oesterreich,"
 Austria.

² Saw.

³ Nurse.

⁴ In all points.

⁵ Guard.

⁶ Little significance has he attached to.

⁷ Cicero ("De Republica," lib. vi.) wrote the Dream
 of Scipio, in which the Younger relates the appearance of
 the Elder Africanus, and the counsels and exhortations
 which the shade addressed to the sleeper. Macrobius
 wrote an elaborate "Commentary on the Dream of
 Scipio,"—a philosophical treatise much studied and
 relished during the Middle Ages. ⁸ Significance.

Ye be so scarlet-hued about your eyen,
 It maketh all my dreadë for to dien,
 For, all so sicker¹⁷ as *In principio*,¹⁸
Mulier est hominis confusio.¹⁹
 (Madam, the sentence²⁰ of this Latin is,
 Woman is mannë's joy and mannë's bliss.)
 For when I feel at night your softë side,—
 Albeit that I may not on you ride,
 For that our perch is made so narrow, alas!—
 I am so full of joy and of solas,²¹
 That I defy both sweven and eke dream."
 And with that word he flew down from the
 beam,

For it was day, and eke his hennës all;
 And with a chuck he gan them for to call,
 For he had found a corn, lay in the yard.
 Royal he was, he was no more afear'd;
 He feather'd Partelotë twenty time,
 And as oft trode her, ere that it was prime.
 He looked as it were a grim lion,
 And on his toes he roamed up and down;
 He deigned not to set his feet to ground;
 He chucked, when he had a corn y-found,
 And to him rannë then his wivës all.
 Thus royal, as a prince is in his hall,
 Leave I this Chanticleer in his pastüre;
 And after will I tell his aventure.

When that the month in which the world
 began,

That hightë March, when God first maked man,
 Was cöplete, and y-passed were also,
 Sincë March ended, thirty days and two,
 Befell that Chanticleer in all his pride,
 His seven wivës walking him beside,
 Cast up his eyen to the brightë sun,
 That in the sign of Taurus had y-run
 Twenty degrees and one, and somewhat more;
 He knew by kind,²² and by none other lore,²³
 That it was prime, and crew with blissful
 steven.²⁴

"The sun," he said, "is clomben up in heaven
 Twenty degrees and one, and more y-wia."²⁵
 Madamë Partelote, my worldë's bliss,
 Harken these blissful birdës how they sing,
 And see the freshe flowers how they spring;
 Full is mine heart of revel and solace."

But suddenly him fell a sorrowful case;²⁶
 For ever the latter end of joy is woe:
 God wot that worldly joy is soon y-go:
 And, if a rhetor²⁷ couldë fair indite,
 He in a chronicle might it safely write,

⁹ Realms.

¹⁰ See the Monk's Tale, page 163.

¹¹ Lost. Andromache's dream will not be found in
 Homer; it is related in the book of the fictitious Dares
 Phrygius, the most popular authority during the Middle
 Ages for the history of the Trojan War.

¹² Hold laxatives of no value.

¹³ Distrust.

¹⁴ Not a whit.

¹⁵ Cease.

¹⁶ Liberal.

¹⁷ Certain.

¹⁸ See note 6, page 20.

¹⁹ This line is taken from the same fabulous confer-
 ence between the Emperor Adrian and the philosopher
 Secundus, whence Chaucer derived some of the argu-
 ments in praise of poverty employed in the Wife of
 Bath's Tale proper. See note 15, page 82. The passage
 transferred to the text is the commencement of a de-
 scription of woman. "Quid est mulier? hominis con-
 fusio," &c.

²⁰ Meaning.

²¹ Delight.

²² Natural instinct.

²³ Learning.

²⁴ Voice.

²⁵ Assuredly.

²⁶ Casualty.

²⁷ Rhetorician, orator.

As for a sov'reign notability.¹

Now every wise man, let him hearken me ;
This story is all as true, I undertake,
As is the book of Launcelot du Lake,
That women hold in full great reverence.
Now will I turn again to my sentence.

A col-fox,² full of sly iniquity,
That in the grove had wonned³ yearës three,
By high imaginatiön forecast,
The samë night thorough the hedges brast⁴
Into the yard, where Chanticleer the fair
Was wont, and eke his wivës, to repair ;
And in a bed of wortës⁵ still he lay,
Till it was passed undern⁶ of the day,
Waiting his time on Chanticleer to fall :
As gladly do these homicidës all,
That in awaitë lie to murder men.
O falsë murd'rer ! rouking⁷ in thy den !
O new Isacariot, new Ganilion !⁸
O false dissimuler, O Greek Sinön,⁹
That broughtest Troy all utterly to sorrow !
O Chanticleer ! accursed be the morrow
That thou into thy yard flew from the beams ;¹⁰
Thou wert full well y-warned by thy dreams
That thilkë day was perilous to thee.
But what that God forewot¹¹ must needës be,
After th' opinion of certain clerkës.
Witness on him that any perfect clerk is,
That in school is grent altercatiön
In this matter, and great disputatiön,
And hath been of an hundred thousand men.
But I ne cannot bould it to the bren,¹²
As can the holy doctor Augustine,
Or Boece, or the bishop Bradwardine,¹³
Whether that Goddë's worthy foreweeting¹⁴
Straineth me needly¹⁵ for to do a thing
(Needly call I simple necessity),
Or ellës if free choice be granted me
To do that samë thing, or do it not,
Though God forewot¹¹ it ere that it was
wrought ;

Or if his weeting¹⁶ straineth¹⁷ never a deal,¹⁸
But by necessity conditionel.
I will not have to do of such mattëre ;
My tale is of a cock, as ye may hear,
That took his counsel of his wife, with sorrow,
To walken in the yard upon the morrow
That he had mette the dream, as I you told.
Womenë's counsels be full often cold ;¹⁹
Womanë's counsel brought us first to woe,
And made Adám from Paradise to go,

¹ A thing supremely notable.

² A blackish fox, so called from its likeness to coal, according to Skinner ; though more probably the prefix has a reproachful meaning, and is in some way connected with the word "cold," as, some forty lines afterwards, it is applied to the prejudicial counsel of women, and as frequently it is used to describe "sighs" and other tokens of grief, and "cares" or "anxieties."

³ Dwelt.

⁴ Burst.

⁵ Cabbages.

⁶ In this case, the meaning of "evening" or "afternoon" can hardly be applied to the word, which must be taken to signify some early hour of the forenoon.

⁷ Crouching, lurking.

⁸ See note 29, page 141 ; and note 18, page 163.

⁹ See note 17, page 117.

¹⁰ Rafters.

¹¹ Foreknows.

¹² Examine the matter thoroughly ; a metaphor taken from the sifting of meal, to divide the fine flour from the bran.

There as he was full merry and well at ease.
But, for I n'ot²⁰ to whom I might displease
If I counsél of women wouldë blame,
Pass over, for I said it in my game.²¹
Read authors, where they treat of such mattëre,
And what they say of women ye may hear.
These be the cockë's wordës, and not mine ;
I can no harm of no woman divine.²²

Fair in the sand, to bathe²³ her merrily,
Lies Partelote, and all her sisters by,
Against the sun, and Chanticleer so free
Sang merrier than the mermaid in the sea ;
For Physiologus saith sickerly,²⁴
How that they singë well and merrily.²⁵
And so befell that, as he cast his eye
Among the wortës,⁵ on a butterfly,
He was ware of this fox that lay full low.
Nothing ne list him thennë²⁶ for to crow,
But cried anon "Cock ! cock !" and up he start,
As man that was affrayed in his heart.
For naturally a beast desireth flee
From his contráry,²⁷ if he may it see,
Though he ne'er erst²⁸ had seen it with his eye
This Chanticleer, when he gan him espy,
He would have fled, but that the fox anon
Said, "Gentle Sir, alas ! why will ye gon ?
Be ye afraid of me that am your friend ?
Now, certes, I were worse than any fiend,
If I to you would harm or villainy.
I am not come your counsel to espy.
But truëly the cause of my coming
Was only for to hearken how ye sing ;
For truëly ye have as merry a steven,²⁹
As any angel hath that is in heaven ;
Therewith ye have of music more feeling,
Than had Boece, or any that can sing.
My lord your father (God his soulë bless)
And eke your mother of her gentleness,
Have in mine housë been, to my great ease :³⁰
And certes, Sir, full fain would I you please.
But, for men speak of singing, I will say,
So may I brookë³¹ well mine eyen tway,
Save you, I heardë never man so sing
As did your father in the morrowning.
Certes it was of heart all that he sung.
And, for to make his voice the morë strong,
He would so pain him,³² that with both his
eyen

He mustë wink, so loud he wouldë cryen,
And standen on his tiptoes therewithal,
And stretchë forth his neckë long and small.

¹³ Thomas Bradwardine, Archbishop of Canterbury in the thirteenth century, who wrote a book, "De Causâ Dei," in controversy with Pelagius ; and also numerous other treatises, among them one on predestination.

¹⁴ Foreknowledge.

¹⁵ Of inevitable necessity.

¹⁶ Knowledge.

¹⁷ Constrains, necessitates.

¹⁸ Not at all.

¹⁹ Mischievous, unwise.

²⁰ Know not.

²¹ Jest.

²² Conjecture, imagine.

²³ Bask.

²⁴ Certainly.

²⁵ In a popular metrical Latin treatise by one Theobaldus, entitled "Physiologus de Naturis XII. Animalium," Sirens are described as skilled in song, and drawing unwary mariners to destruction by the sweetness of their voices.

²⁶ Then he had no inclination.

²⁷ Enemy.

²⁸ Never before.

²⁹ Voice.

³⁰ Satisfaction.

³¹ Enjoy, possess, or use.

³² Make such an exertion.

And eke he was of such discreti3n,
That there was no man, in no regi3n,
That him in song or wisdom might3 pass.
I have well read in Dan Burnel the Ass,¹
Among his verse, how that there was a cock
That, for² a priest3's son gave him a knock
Upon his leg, while he was young and nice,³
He made him for to lose his benefice.
But certain there is no comparisi3n
Betwixt the wisdom and discreti3n
Of your3 father, and his subtilty.
Now sing3, Sir, for saint3 charity,
Let see, can ye your father counterfeit?"

This Chanticleer his wings began to beat,
As man that could not his treasi3n espy,
So was he ravish'd with his flattery.
Alas! ye lord3s, many a false flattour⁴
Is in your court, and many a losengeour,⁵
That pleas3 you well mor3, by my faith,
Than he that soothfastness⁶ unto you saith.
Read in Ecclesiast of flattery;
Beware, ye lord3s, of their treachery.
This Chanticleer stood high upon his toes,
Stretching his neck, and held his eyen close,
And gan to crow3 loud3 for the nonce:⁷
And Dan Russel⁸ the fox start up at once,
And by the gargat hent3⁹ Chanticleer,
And on his back toward the wood him bare.
For yet was there no man that him pursu'd.
O destiny, that may'st not be eschew'd!¹⁰
Alas, that Chanticleer flew from the beams!
Alas, his wif3 raught3¹¹ nought of dreams!
And on a Friday fell all this mischance.
O Venus, that art goddess of pleas3nce,
Since that thy servant was this Chanticleer,
And in thy service did all his pow3re,
More for delight, than the world to multiply,
Why wilt thou suffer him on thy day to die?
O Gaufrid, dear3 master sovereign,
That, when thy worthy king Rich3rd was slain¹²
With shot, complainedest his death so sore,
Why n' had I now thy sentence and thy
lore,
The Friday for to chiden, as did ye?
(For on a Friday, soothly, slain was he),

¹ "Nigellus Wireker," says Urry's Glossary, "a monk and precentor of Canterbury, wrote a Latin poem intituled 'Speculum Speculorum,' dedicated to William Longchamp, Bishop of Ely, and Lord Chancellor; wherein, under the fable of an Ass (which he calls 'Burnellus') that desired a longer tail, is represented the folly of such as are not content with their own condition. There is introduced a tale of a cock, who having his leg broke by a priest's son (called Gundulfus) watched an opportunity to be revenged; which at last presented itself on this occasion: A day was appointed for Gundulfus's being admitted into holy orders at a place remote from his father's habitation; he therefore orders the servants to call him at first cock-crowing, which the cock overhearing did not crow at all that morning. So Gundulfus overslept himself, and was thereby disappointed of his ordination; the office being quite finished before he came to the place." Wireker's satire was among the most celebrated and popular Latin poems of the Middle Ages. The Ass was probably, as Tyrwhitt suggests, called "Burnel," or "Brunel," from his brown colour; as, a little below, the reddish fox is called "Russel."

² Because.

³ Foolish.

⁴ Flatterer; French, "flatteur."

⁵ Deceiver, cozeners; the word had analogues in the French "losengier," and the Spanish "lisongero." It

Then would I shew you how that I could plain
For Chanticleer's dread, and for his pain.

Certes such cry nor lamentati3n
Was ne'er of ladies made, when Ili3n
Was won, and Pyrrhus¹³ with his straight3
sward,
When he had hent king Priam by the beard,
And slain him (as saith us *Eneid*),¹⁴
As maden all the henn3s in the close,¹⁵
When they had seen of Chanticleer the sight.
But sov'reignly¹⁶ Dame Partelot3 shrighet,¹⁶
Full louder than did Hasdrubal3's wife,
When that her husband hadd3 lost his life,
And that the Romans had y-burnt Carthage;
She was so full of torment and of rage,
That wilfully into the fire she start,
And burnt herself with a steadfast heart.
O woeful henn3s! right so cri3d ye,
As, when that Nero burned the city
Of Rom3, cried the senator3s' wives,
For that their husbands losten all their lives;
Without3 guilt this Nero hath them slain.

Now will I turn unto my tale again;
The sely¹⁷ widow, and her daughters two,
Heard3 these henn3s cry and mak3 woe,
And at the doors out started they anon,
And saw the fox toward the wood is gone,
And bare upon his back the cock away:
They cri3d, "Out! harow! and well-away!
Aha! the fox!" and after him they ran,
And eke with stav3s many another man;
Ran Coll our dog, and Talbot, and Garl3nd;
And Malkin, with her distaff in her hand;
Ran cow and calf, and eke the very hogg3s,
So fear'd they were for barking of the dogg3s,
And shouting of the men and women eke.
They rann3 so, them thought their hearts would
break.

They yelled as the fiend3s do in hell;
The duck3s cri3d as men would them quell;¹⁸
The geese for fear3 flewen o'er the trees,
Out of the hiv3 came the swarm of bees,
So hideous was the noise, *ben'dicite!*
Certes he, Jack3 Straw,¹⁹ and his meinie,²⁰
Ne mad3 never shout3s half so shrill,

is probably connected with "leasing," falsehood, which has been derived from Anglo-Saxon "hlisan," to celebrate—as if it meant the spreading of a false renown.

⁶ Truth.

⁷ Occasion.

⁸ Master Russel; a name given to the fox, from his reddish colour.

⁹ Seized him by the throat.

¹⁰ Escaped.

¹¹ Recked, regarded.

¹² Geoffrey de Vinsauf was the author of a well-known mediæval treatise on composition in various poetical styles, of which he gave examples. Chaucer's irony is here directed against some grandiose and affected lines on the death of Richard I., intended to illustrate the pathetic style, in which Friday is addressed as "O Veneris lachrymosa dies!"

¹³ "[Priamum] altaria ad ipsa trementem
Traxit, et in multo lapsantem sanguine nati;
Implicuitque comam lævâ, dextrâque coruscum
Extulit, ac lateri capulo tensus addidit ensem.
Hæc finis Priami fatum."

—VIRGIL, *Eneid*. ii. 550.

¹⁴ Yard, enclosure.

¹⁵ Above all others.

¹⁶ Shrieked.

¹⁷ Simple, honest.

¹⁸ Kill, destroy.

¹⁹ The leader of a Kentish rising, in the reign of Richard II., in 1381, by which the Flemish merchants in London were great sufferers.

²⁰ Followers.

When that they woulden any Fleming kill,
As thilkē day was made upon the fox.
Of brass they broughtē beamēs¹ and of box,
Of horn and bone, in which they blew and
pooped,²

And therewithal they shrieked and they
hooped;

It seemed as the heaven shouldē fall.

Now, goodē men, I pray you hearken all;

Lo, how Fortūnē turneth suddenly

The hope and pride eke of her enemy.

This cock, that lay upon the fox's back,

In all his dread unto the fox he spake;

And saidē, "Sir, if that I were as ye,

Yet would I say (as wisly³ God help me),

'Turn ye again, ye proudē churlēs all;⁴

A very pestilence upon you fall.

Now am I come unto the woodē's side,

Maugré your head, the cock shall here abide;

I will him eat, in faith, and that anon."

The fox answer'd, "In faith it shall be done:"

And, as he spake the word, all suddenly

The cock brake from his mouth deliverly,⁵

And high upon a tree he flew anon.

And when the fox saw that the cock was gone,

"Alas!" quoth he, "O Chanticleer, alas!

I have," quoth he, "y-done to you trespass,⁶

Inasmuch as I maked you afear'd,

When I you hent,⁷ and brought out of your
yard;

But, Sir, I did it in no wick' intent;

Come down, and I shall tell you what I meant.

I shall say sooth to you, God help me so."

"Nay then," quoth he, "I shrew⁸ us both
the two,

And first I shrew myself, both blood and bones,

If thou beguile me oftener than once.

Thou shalt no morē through thy flattery

Do⁹ me to sing and winkē with mine eye;

For he that winketh when he shouldē see,

All wilfully, God let him never thé."¹⁰

"Nay," quoth the fox; "but God give him
mischance

That is so indiscreet of governānce,

That jangleth¹¹ when that he should hold his
peace."

¹ Trumpets; Anglo-Saxon, "bema."

² Made a popping or tooting noise.

⁴ Addressing the pursuers.

⁶ Offence.

⁹ Cause.

¹² For our instruction. See 2 Tim. iii. 16.

¹³ Certainly.

¹⁴ A marginal note on a manuscript indicates that some Archbishop of Canterbury is here quoted.

¹⁵ A layman.

¹⁷ The brawny parts of the body.

¹⁸ The sixteen lines appended to the Tale of the Nun's Priest seem, as Tyrwhitt observes, to commence the prologue to the succeeding Tale—but the difficulty is to determine which that Tale should be. In earlier editions, the lines formed the opening of the prologue to the Manciple's Tale; but most of the manuscripts acknowledge themselves defective in this part, and give the Nun's Tale after that of the Nun's Priest. In the Harleian manuscript, followed by Mr Wright, the second Nun's Tale, and the Canon's Yeoman's Tale, are placed after the Franklin's Tale; and the sixteen lines above are not found—the Manciple's prologue coming immediately after the "Amen" of the Nun's Priest. In two manuscripts, the last line of the sixteen runs thus: "Said unto the Nun as ye shall hear;"

³ Surely.

⁵ Nimbly.

⁸ Curse.

¹¹ Prateth.

Lo, what it is for to be reckless
And negligent, and trust on flattery.

But ye that holdē this tale a folly,

As of a fox, or of a cock or hen,

Take the morality thereof, good men.

For Saint Paul saith, That all that written is,

To our doctrine¹² it written is y-wis.¹³

Takē the fruit, and let the chaff be still.

Now goodē God, if that it be thy will,

As saith my Lord,¹⁴ so make us all good men;

And bring us all to thy high bliss. Amen.

"Sir Nunnē's Priest," our Hostē said anon,

"Y-blessed be thy breech, and every stone;

This was a merry tale of Chanticleer.

But by my truth, if thou wert seculere,¹⁵

Thou wouldest be a treadefowl¹⁶ aright;

For if thou have courāge as thou hast might,

Thee werē need of hennēs, as I ween,

Yea more than seven timēs seventeen.

See, whatē brawnēs¹⁷ hath this gentle priest,

So great a neck, and such a largē breast!

He looketh as a sperhawk with his eyen;

Him needeth not his colour for to dyen

With Brazil, nor with grain of Portogale.

But, Sirē, fairē fall you for your tale."

And, after that, he with full merry cheer

Said to another, as ye shallē hear.¹⁸

THE SECOND NUN'S TALE.¹⁹

THE minister and norice²⁰ unto vices,

Which that men call in English idleness,

The porter at the gate is of delices;²¹

T'eschew, and by her contrar' her oppress,—

That is to say, by lawful business,²²

Well oughtē we to do all our intent,²³

Lest that the fiend through idleness us hent.²⁴

For he, that with his thousand cordēs aly

Continually us waiteth to beclap,²⁵

When he may man in idleness espy,

He can so lightly catch him in his trap,

and six lines more, evidently forged, are given to introduce the Nun's Tale. All this confusion and doubt only strengthen the certainty, and deepen the regret, that "The Canterbury Tales" were left at Chaucer's death not merely very imperfect as a whole, but destitute of many finishing touches that would have made them complete so far as the conception had actually been carried into performance.

¹⁹ This Tale was originally composed by Chaucer as a separate work, and as such it is mentioned in the "Legend of Good Women" under the title of "The Life of Saint Cecile." Tyrwhitt quotes the line in which the author calls himself an "unworthy son of Eve," and that in which he says, "Yet pray I you, that readē what I write" (see note 17, page 172), as internal evidence that the insertion of the poem among the Canterbury Tales was the result of an afterthought; while the whole tenor of the introduction confirms the belief that Chaucer composed it as a writer or translator—not, dramatically, as a speaker. The story is almost literally translated from the Life of St Cecilia in the "Legenda Aurea."

²⁰ Nurse.

²² Occupation, activity.

²³ Endeavour, apply ourselves.

²⁵ Entangle, bind.

²¹ Delights.

²⁴ Seize.

Till that a man be hent right by the lappe,¹
He is not ware the fiend hath him in hand ;
Well ought we work, and idleness withstand.

And though men dreaded never for to die,
Yet see men well by reason, doubtless,
That idleness is root of sluggardý,
Of which there cometh never good increase ;
And see that sloth them holdeth in a leas,²
Only to sleep, and for to eat and drink,
And to devouren all that others swink.³

And, for to put us from such idleness,
That cause is of so great confusión,
I have here done my faithful business,
After the Legend, in translation
Right of thy glorious life and passion,—
Thou with thy garland wrought of rose and lily,
Thee mean I, maid and martyr, Saint Cecílie.

And thou, thou art the flow'r of virgins all,
Of whom that Bernard list so well to write,⁴
To thee at my beginning first I call ;
Thou comfort of us wretches, do me indite
Thy maiden's death, that won through her
merite

Th' eternal life, and o'er the fiend victóry,
As man may after readen in her story.

Thou maid and mother, daughter of thy Son,
Thou well of mercy, sinful soul's cure,
In whom that God of bounté chose to won ;⁵
Thou humble and high o'er every créature,
Thou noblest, so far forth our nature,⁶
That no disdain the Maker had of kind,⁷
His Son in blood and flesh to clothe and wind.⁸

Within the cloister of thy blissful sidés
Took manné's shape th' eternal love and peace,
That of the triné compass⁹ Lord and guide is ;
Whom earth, and sea, and heav'n, out of release,¹⁰
Aye hery ;¹¹ and thou, Virgin wemméless,¹²
Bare of thy body, and dweltest maiden pure,
The Créator of every créature.

Assembled is in thee magnificence¹³
With mercy, goodness, and with such pity,
That thou, that art the sun of excellence,
Not only helpst them that pray to thee,
But oftentime, of thy benignity,
Full freely, ere that men thine help beseech,
Thou go'st before, and art their livés' leech.¹⁴

Now help, thou meek and blissful fairé maid,
Me, flemed¹⁵ wretch, in this desért of gall ;
Think on the woman Canané, that said
That whelpés eat some of the crumbés all
That from their Lordé's table be y-fall ;¹⁶
And though that I, unworthy son of Eve,¹⁷
Be sinful, yet accepté my believe.¹⁸

And, for that faith is dead withouté werkés,

¹ Skirt, or lappet, of a garment.

² Leash, snare ; the same as "las," oftener used in Chaucer.

³ For which others labour.

⁴ The nativity and assumption of the Virgin Mary formed the themes of some of St Bernard's most eloquent sermons.

⁵ Dwell.

⁶ Thou noblest one, as far as our nature admitted.

⁷ Nature.

⁸ Wrap.

⁹ The Trinity.

¹⁰ Without remission, unceasingly.

¹¹ Praise.

¹² Without blemish.

¹³ Compare with this stanza the fourth stanza of the Prioress's Tale, page 144, the substance of which is the same.

¹⁴ Healer, saviour.

So for to worké give me wit and space,
That I be quit from thennes that most derk is ;¹⁹
O thou, that art so fair and full of grace,
Be thou mine advocate in that high place,
Where as withouten end is sung Osanne,
Thou Christé's mother, daughter dear of
Anne.

And of thy light my soul in prison light,
That troubled is by the contagiôn
Of my body, and also by the weight
Of earthly lust and false affection ;
O hav'n of refuge, O salvatiôn
Of them that be in sorrow and distress,
Now help, for to my work I will me dress.

Yet pray I you, that readé what I write,¹⁷
Forgive me that I do no diligence
This ilké²⁰ story subtilly t' indite.
For both have I the wordés and sentéce
Of him that at the sainté's reverence
The story wrote, and follow her légend ;
And pray you that you will my work amend.

First will I you the name of Saint Cecílie
Expound, as men may in her story see.
It is to say in English, Heaven's lily,²¹
For puré chasteness of virginity ;
Or, for she whiteness had of honesty,²²
And green of consciéce, and of good fame
The sweeté savour, Lilie was her name.

Or Cecílie is to say, the way of blind ;²³
For she example was by good teaching ;
Or else Cecílie, as I written find,
Is joined by a manner conjoining
Of heaven and *Lia*,²⁴ and herein figuring
The heaven is set for thought of holiness,
And *Lia* for her lasting business.

Cecílie may eke be said in this mannére,
Wanting of blindness, for her greaté light
Of sapiéce, and for her thewes²⁵ clear.
Or ellés, lo, this maiden's namé bright
Of heaven and *Leos* comes, for which by right
Men might her well the heaven of people call,
Example of good and wisé workés all ;

For *Leos* people²⁶ in English is to say ;²⁷
And right as men may in the heaven see
The sun and moon, and starrés every way,
Right so men ghostly,²⁸ in this maiden free,
Sawen of faith the magnanimity,
And eke the clearness whole of sapiéce,
And sundry workés bright of excellence.

And right so as these philosóphers write,
That heav'n is swift and round, and eke burning,
Right so was fairé Cecílie the white
Full swift and busy in every good working,
And round and whole²⁹ in good persévering,

¹⁵ Banished, outcast.

¹⁶ Matthew xv. 26, 27.

¹⁷ See note 19, page 171.

¹⁸ Faith.

¹⁹ Delivered from that place where is outer darkness.

²⁰ Same.

²¹ Latin, "Coeli liliū." Such punning derivations of proper names were very much in favour in the Middle Ages. The explanations of St Cecilia's name are literally taken from the prologue to the Latin legend.

²² Purity.

²³ Latin, "Cæci via."

²⁴ From "Cælum," and "ligo," I bind.

²⁵ Qualities.

²⁶ Greek, λαος, ληος (Ion.) λεως (Att.), the people.

²⁷ Signifies.

²⁸ Spiritually.

²⁹ The passage suggests Horace's description of the

And burning ever in charity full bright ;
Now have I you declared what she hight.¹

This maiden bright Cecile, as her life saith,
Was come of Romans, and of noble kind,
And from her cradle foster'd in the faith
Of Christ, and bare his Gospel in her mind :
She never ceased, as I written find,
Of her prayere, and God to love and dread,
Beseeching him to keep her maidenhead.

And when this maiden should unto a man
Y-wedded be, that was full young of age,
Which that y-called was Valerian,
And comē was the day of marriage,
She, full devout and humble in her corage,²
Under her robe of gold, that sat full fair,
Had next her flesh y-clad her in an hair.³

And while the organs madē melody,
To God alone thus in her heart sang she ;
"O Lord, my soul and eke my body gie⁴
Unwemmed,⁵ lest that I confounded be."
And, for his love that died upon the tree,
Every second or third day she fast',
Aye bidding⁶ in her orisons full fast.

The night came, and to beddē must she gon
With her husband, as it is the mannere ;
And privily she said to him anon ;
"O sweet and well-beloved spousē dear,
There is a counsel,⁷ an'⁸ ye will it hear,
Which that right fain I would unto you say,
So that ye swear ye will it not bewray."

Valerian gan fast unto her swear
That for no case nor thing that mightē be,
He never should to none bewrayen her ;
And then at erst⁹ thus to him saidē she ;
"I have an angel which that loveth me,
That with great love, whether I wake or sleep,
Is ready aye my body for to keep ;

"And if that he may feelen, out of dread,¹⁰
That ye me touch or love in villainy,
He right anon will slay you with the deed,
And in your youthē thus ye shouldē die.
And if that ye in cleanē love me gie,¹¹
He will you love as me, for your cleanness,
And shew to you his joy and his brightnēss."

Valerian, corrected as God wo'ld,
Answer'd again, "If I shall trustē thee,
Let me that angel see, and him behold ;
And if that it a very angel be,
Then will I do as thou hast prayed me ;
And if thou love another man, forsooth
Right with this sword then will I slay you both."

Cecile answer'd anon right in this wise ;
"If that you list, the angel shall ye see,
So that ye trow¹² on Christ, and you baptise ;
Go forth to Via Appia," quoth she,
"That from this townē¹³ stands but milēs
three,

wise man, who, among other things, is "in se ipso
totus, teres, atque rotundus."—"Satires," 2, vii. 86.

1 Why she had her name.

2 Heart.

3 Garment of hair-cloth.

4 Guide, keep.

5 Unspotted, blameless.

6 Praying.

7 Secret.

8 If.

9 For the first time.

11 Govern, dispose of.

10 Doubt.

12 Rome.

13 Believe.

And to the poorē folkēs that there dwell
Say them right thus, as that I shall you tell.

"Tell them, that I, Cecile, you to them sent,
To shewē you the good Urban the old,
For secret needēs,¹⁴ and for good intent ;
And when that ye Saint Urban have behold,
Tell him the wordēs which I to you told ;
And when that he hath purged you from sin,
Then shall ye see that angel ere ye twin."¹⁵

Valerian is to the placē gone ;
And, right as he was taught by her learning,
He found this holy old Urban anon
Among the saintēs' burials louting ;¹⁶
And he anon, withoutē tarrying,
Did his messāge, and when that he it told,
Urban for joy his handēs gan uphold.

The tearēs from his eyen let he fall ;
"Almighty Lord, O Jesus Christ," quoth he,
"Sower of chaste counsēl, herd¹⁷ of us all ;
The fruit of thilkē¹⁸ seed of chastity
That thou hast sown in Cecile, take to thee :
Lo, like a busy bee, withoutē guile,
Thee serveth aye thine owen thrall¹⁹ Cecile.

"For thilkē spousē, that she took but new,²⁰
Full like a fierce lōn, she sendeth here,
As meek as e'er was any lamb to ewe."
And with that word anon there gan appear
An old man, clad in whitē clothēs clear,
That had a book with letters of gold in hand,
And gan before Valerian to stand.

Valerian, as dead, fell down for dread,
When he him saw ; and he up hent²¹ him tho,²²
And on his book right thus he gan to read ;
"One Lord, one faith, one God withoutē mo',
One Christendom, one Father of all alsō,
Aboven all, and over all everywhere."
These wordēs all with gold y-written were.

When this was read, then said this oldē man,
"Believ'st thou this or no ? say yea or nay."
"I believe all this," quoth Valerian,
"For soother²³ thing than this, I dare well say,
Under the heaven no wight thinkē may."
Then vanish'd the old man, he wist not where ;
And Pope Urban him christened right there.

Valerian went home, and found Cecillie
Within his chamber with an angel stand ;
This angel had of roses and of lily
Coronēs²⁴ two, the which he bare in hand,
And first to Cecile, as I understand,
He gave the one, and after gan he take
The other to Valerian her make.²⁵

"With body clean, and with unwemmed⁹
thought,
Keep aye well these coronēs two," quoth he ;
"From Paradise to you I have them brought,
Nor ever morē shall they rotten²⁶ be,
Nor lose their sweetē savour, trustē me,

14 Business.

15 Depart.

16 Linger, or lying concealed, among the burial-
places of the saints ; the Latin original has "inter
sepulchra martyrum latitantem."

17 Shepherd, keeper.

18 That.

19 Servant, handmaid.

20 But lately, newly.

21 Took, lifted.

22 Then.

23 Truer.

24 Crowns.

25 Mate, husband.

26 Decayed.

Nor ever wight shall see them with his eye,
But¹ he be chaste, and hatē villainy.

"And thou, Valerian, for thou so soon
Assented hast to good counsél, also
Say what thee list, and thou shalt have thy
boon."²

"I have a brother," quoth Valerian tho,³
"That in this world I lovē no man so ;
I pray you that my brother may have grace
To know the truth, as I do in this place."

The angel said, "God liketh thy request,
And bothē, with the palm of martyrdom,
Ye shallē come unto his blissful rest."
And, with that word, Tiburce his brother come.
And when that he the savour undernome⁴
Which that the roses and the lilies cast,
Within his heart he gan to wonder fast ;

And said ; "I wonder, this time of the year,
Whencō that sweetē savour cometh so
Of rose and lilies, that I smellē here ;
For though I had them in mine handēs two,
The savour might in me no deeper go ;
The sweetē smell, that in my heart I find,
Hath changed me all in another kind."⁵

Valerian said, "Two crownēs here have we,
Snow-white and rosē-red, that shinē clear,
Which that thine eyen have no might to see ;
And, as thou smellest them through my prayēre,
So shalt thou see them, levē⁶ brother dear,
If it so be thou wilt withoutē sloth
Believe aright, and know the very troth."⁷

Tiburce answered, "Say'st thou this to me
In soothness, or in dreamē hear I this ?"
"In dreamēs," quoth Valerian, "have we be
Unto this timē, brother mine, y-wis :⁸
But now at erst⁹ in truth our dwelling is."
"How know'st thou this," quoth Tiburce ; "in
what wise ?"

Quoth Valerian, "That shall I thee devise."¹⁰

"The angel of God hath me the truth
y-taught,
Which thou shalt see, if that thou wilt reny¹¹
The idols, and be clean, and ellēs nought."
[¹²And of the miracle of these crownēs tway
Saint Ambrose in his preface list to say ;
Solemnly this noble doctor dear
Commendeth it, and saith in this mannere :

"The palm of martyrdom for to receive,
Saint Cecilie, full filled of God's gift,
The world and eke her chamber gan to weive ;¹³
Witness Tiburce's and Cecilie's shrift,¹⁴
To which God of his bounty wouldē shift¹⁵
Coronēs two, of flowers well smelling,
And made his angel them the crownēs bring.

"The maid hath brought these men to bliss
above ;
The world hath wist what it is worth, certáin,

Devotion of chastity to love."].

Then showed him Cecile all open and plain,
That idols all are but a thing in vain,
For they be dumb, and thereto¹⁶ they be
deave ;¹⁷

And charged him his idols for to leave.

"Whoso that trow'th¹⁸ not this, a beast
he is,"

Quoth this Tiburce, "if that I shall not lie."
And she gan kiss his breast when she heard this,
And was full glad he could the truth espy :
"This day I takē thee for mine ally,"¹⁹
Saidē this blissful fairē maiden dear ;
And after that she said as ye may hear.

"Lo, right so as the love of Christ," quoth
she,

"Made me thy brother's wife, right in that wise
Anon for mine ally here take I thee,
Since that thou wilt thine idolēs despise.
Go with thy brother now and thee baptise,
And make thee clean, so that thou may'st
behold

The angel's face, of which thy brother told."

Tiburce answer'd, and saidē, "Brother dear,
First tell me whither I shall, and to what man ?"
"To whom ?" quoth he, "come forth with
goodē cheer,
I will thee lead unto the Pope Urbán."
"To Urban ? brother mine Valerian,"
Quoth then Tiburce ; "wilt thou me thither
lead ?

Me thinketh that it were a wondrous deed.

"Meanest thou not that Urban," quoth he
tho,²

"That is so often damned to be dead,
And wonē²⁰ in halkēs²¹ always to and fro,
And dare not onēs puttē forth his head ?
Men should him brennen²² in a fire so red,
If he were found, or if men might him spy :
And us also, to bear him company.

"And while we seekē that Divinity
That is y-hid in heaven privily,
Algatē²³ burnt in this world should we be."
To whom Cecilie answer'd boldēly ;
"Men mightē dreadē well and skilfully²⁴
This life to lose, mine owen dearē brother,
If this were living only, and none other.

"But there is better life in other place,
That never shall be lostē, dread thee nought ;
Which Goddē's Son us toldē through his grace,
That Father's Son which allē thingēs wrought ;
And all that wrought is with a skilful²⁵ thought,
The Ghost,²⁶ that from the Father gan proceed,
Hath souled²⁷ them, withouten any drede.²⁸

"By word and by miracle, high God's Son,
When he was in this world, declared here,
That there is other life where men may won."²⁹

¹ Unless.

² Request.

³ Then.

⁴ Perceived.

⁵ Into another being or nature.

⁶ Beloved.

⁷ Truth.

⁸ Verily.

⁹ For the first time.

¹⁰ Tell.

¹¹ Renounce.

¹² The fourteen lines within brackets are supposed to have been originally an interpolation in the Latin legend, from which they are literally translated. They awkwardly interrupt the flow of the narration.

¹³ Forsake.

¹⁴ Allot, appropriate.

¹⁵ Deaf.

¹⁶ Chosen friend.

¹⁷ Dwelleth.

¹⁸ Burn.

¹⁹ Reasonably.

²⁰ Spirit.

²¹ Doubt.

²² Confession.

²³ Moreover.

²⁴ Believeth.

²⁵ Corners.

²⁶ Nevertheless.

²⁷ Reasonable.

²⁸ Endowed them with a soul.

²⁹ Dwell.

To whom answer'd Tiburce, "O sister dear,
Saidest thou not right now in this mannere,
There was but one God, Lord in soothfastness,¹
And now of three how may'st thou bear wit-
ness?"

"That shall I tell," quoth she, "ere that
I go.

Right as a man hath sapiences three,
Memory, engine,² and intellect also,
So in one being of divinity
Three persones there maye right well be."
Then gan she him full busily to preach
Of Christe's coming, and his paines teach,

And many pointes of his passion;
How Godde's Son in this world was withhold³
To do mankind plein⁴ remission,
That was y-bound in sin and carres cold.⁵
All this thing she unto Tiburce told,
And after this Tiburce, in good intent,
With Valerian to Pope Urban he went;

That thanked God, and with glad heart and
light

He christen'd him, and made him in that place
Perfekt in his learning, and Godde's knight.
And after this Tiburce got such grace,
That every day he saw in time and space
Th' angel of God, and every manner boon⁶.
That he God asked, it was sped⁷ full soon.

It were full hard by order for to sayn
How many wonders Jesus for them wrought.
But at the last, to telle short and plain,
The sergeants of the town of Rome them sought,
And them before Almach the prefekt brought,
Which them appos'd,⁸ and knew all their in-
tent,

And to th' image of Jupiter them sent;

And said, "Whoso will not do sacrifice,
Swap⁹ off his head, this is my sentence here."
Anon these martyrs, that I you devise,¹⁰
One Maximus, that was an officere
Of the prefekt's, and his corniculere,¹¹
Them hent,¹² and when he forth the saintes
lad,¹³

Himself he wept for pity that he had.

When Maximus had heard the saintes' lore,¹⁴
He got him of the tormentors leave,
And led them to his house withoute more;
And with their preaching, ere that it were eve,
They gonnen¹⁵ from the tormentors to reave,¹⁶
And from Maxim', and from his folk each one,
The falsē faith, to trow¹⁷ in God alone.

Cecilia came, when it was waxen night,
With priestes, that them christen'd all in fere;¹⁸
And afterward, when day was waxen light,
Cecile them said with a full steadfast cheer,¹⁹
"Now, Christe's owen knightes lefe²⁰ and dear,

Cast all away the workes of darknes,
And arme you in armour of brightnes.

"Ye have forsooth y-done a great bataille;
Your course is done,²¹ your faith have ye con-
served;

Go to the crown of life that may not fail;
The rightful Judge, which that ye have served,
Shall give it you, as ye have it deserved."
And when this thing was said, as I devise,²²
Men led them forth to do the sacrifice.

But when they were unto the place brought,
To telle shortly the conclusion,
They would incense nor sacrifice right nought.
But on their knees they sette them adown,
With humble heart and sad²³ devotion,
And loste both their heades in the place;²⁴
Their soules wente to the King of grace.

This Maximus, that saw this thing betide,
With piteous teares told it anon right,
That he their soules saw to heaven glide
With angels, full of clearness and of light;
And with his word converted many a wight.
For which Almachius did him to-beat²⁵
With whip of lead, till he his life gan lete.²⁶

Cecile him took, and buried him anon
By Tiburce and Valerian softly,
Within their burying-place, under the stone.
And after this Almachius hastily
Bade his ministers fetchen openly
Cecile, so that she might in his presēce
Do sacrifice, and Jupiter incense.²⁷

But they, converted at her wisē lore,²⁸
Wepte full sore, and gave full credence
Unto her word, and criēd more and more;
"Christ, Godde's Son, withoute difference,
Is very God, this is all our sentence,²⁹
That hath so good a servant him to serve:
Thus with one voice we trowe,³⁰ though we
sterve."³¹

Almachius, that heard of this doing,
Bade fetch Cecile, that he might her see;
And alderfirst,³² lo, this was his asking;
"What manner woman artē thou?" quoth he.
"I am a gentle woman born," quoth she.
"I askē thee," quoth he, "though it thee
grieve,
Of thy religion and of thy believe."

"Ye have begun your question foolishly,"
Quoth she, "that wouldest two answers con-
clude

In one demand? ye askē lewēdly."³³

Almach answer'd to that similitude,

"Of whencē comes thine answering so rude?"
"Of whencē?" quoth she, when that she was
freined,³⁴

"Of conscience, and of good faith unfeigned."

¹ Truth.

² Wit; the devising or constructive faculty; Latin, "ingenium."

³ Employed.

⁴ Full.

⁵ Distressful, wretched. See note 2, page 169.

⁶ Request, favour.

⁷ Granted, successful.

⁸ Questioned.

⁹ Strike.

¹⁰ Of whom I tell you.

¹¹ The secretary or registrar who was charged with publishing the acts, decrees, and orders of the prefekt.

¹² Seized.

¹³ Led.

¹⁴ Doctrine, teaching.

¹⁵ Began.

¹⁶ To wrest, root out.

¹⁷ Believe.

¹⁸ In a company.

¹⁹ Mien.

²⁰ Beloved.

²¹ See 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8; "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith," &c.

²² Relate.

²³ Steadfast.

²⁴ On the spot.

²⁵ Caused him to be cruelly or fatally beaten; the force of the "to" is intensive.

²⁶ Quit.

²⁷ Burn incense to.

²⁸ Teaching.

²⁹ Opinion.

³⁰ Believe.

³¹ Die.

³² First of all.

³³ Ignorantly.

³⁴ Asked.

Almachius said; "Takest thou no heed
Of my power?" and she him answer'd this;
"Your might," quoth she, "full little is to
dread;

For every mortal mann's power is
But like a bladder full of wind, y-wis;¹
For with a needle's point, when it is blow',
May all the boast of it be laid full low."

"Full wrongfully begunnest thou," quoth he,
"And yet in wrong is thy persévérance.
Know'st thou not how our mighty princes free
Have thus commanded and made ordinance,
That every Christian wight shall have penance,²
But if that he his Christendom witheay,³
And go all quit, if he will it renay?"⁴

"Your princes erren, as your nobley⁵ doth,"
Quoth then Cecile, "and with a wood⁶ sentence⁷
Ye make us guilty, and it is not sooth:⁸
For ye that knowë well our innocence,
Forasmuch as we do aye reverence
To Christ, and for we bear a Christian name,
Ye put on us a crime and eke a blame.

"But we that knowë thilkë namë so
For virtuous, we may it not withsay."
Almach answered, "Choose one of these two,
Do sacrifice, or Christendom renay,
That thou may'st now escapë by that way."
At which the holy blisful fairë maid
Gan for to laugh, and to the judgë said;

"O judge, confused in thy nicety,⁹
Wouldest thou that I rény innocence?
To makë me a wicked wight," quoth she,
"Lo, he dissimuleth¹⁰ here in audience;
He stareth and woodeth¹¹ in his advertence."¹²
To whom Almachius said, "Unsely¹³ wretch,
Knowest thou not how far my might may
stretch?

"Have not our mighty princes to me given
Yea bothë power and eke authority
To makë folk to dien or to liven?
Why speakest thou so proudly then to me?"
"I speakë not but steadfastly," quoth she,
Not proudly, for I say, as for my side,
We hatë deadly¹⁴ thilkë vice of pride.

"And, if thou dreadë not a sooth¹⁵ to hear,
Then will I shew all openly by right,
That thou hast made a full great leasing¹⁶ here.
Thou say'st thy princes have thee given might
Both for to slay and for to quick¹⁷ a wight,—
Thou that may'st not but only life bereave;
Thou hast none other power nor no leave.

"But thou may'st say, thy princes have thee
maked
Minister of death; for if thou speak of mo',
Thou liest; for thy power is full naked."
"Do away¹⁸ thy boldness," said Almachius tho,¹⁹
"And sacrifice to our gods, ere thou go.

¹ Certainly.

² Punishment.

³ Nobility.

⁴ True.

⁵ Dissembles.

⁶ Thought, consideration.

⁷ Mortally.

⁸ Give life to.

⁹ Then.

¹⁰ Every sort of way.

¹¹ Deny.

¹² Mad.

¹³ Confounded in thy folly.

¹⁴ Grows mad, furious.

¹⁵ Truth.

¹⁶ Cease, have done with.

¹⁷ Foolish.

¹⁸ Folly.

¹⁹ Renounce.

²⁰ Judgment.

²¹ Unhappy.

²² Falsehood.

I reckon not what wrong that thou me proffer,
For I can suffer it as a philosopher.

"But those wrongës may I not endure,
That thou speak'st of our goddës here," quoth
he.

Cecile answer'd, "O nicë²³ creature,
Thou saidest no word, since thou spake to me,
That I knew not therewith thy nicety,²⁴
And that thou wert in every manner wise²⁵
A lewëd²⁶ officer, a vain justice.

"There lacketh nothing to thine outward
eyen
That thou art blind; for thing that we see all
That it is stone, that men may well espyen,
That ilkë²⁷ stone a god thou wilt it call.
I rede²⁸ thee let thine hand upon it fall,
And taste²⁹ it well, and stone thou shalt it find;
Since that thou see'st not with thine eyen
blind.

"It is a shamë that the people shall
So scornë thee, and laugh at thy follý;
For commonly men wot it well over all,³⁰
That mighty God is in his heaven high;
And these imáges, well may'st thou espy,
To thee nor to themselves may not profite,
For in effect they be not worth a mite."

These wordës and such others saidë she,
And he wax'd wroth, and bade men should her
lead

Home to her house; "And in her house,"
quoth he,

"Burn her right in a bath, with flamës red."
And as he bade, right so was done the deed;
For in a bath they gan her fastë shetten,³¹
And night and day great fire they under
betten.³²

The longë night, and eke a day also,
For all the fire, and eke the bathë's heat,
She sat all cold, and felt of it no woe,
It made her not one droppë for to sweat;
But in that bath her lifë she must lete.³³
For he, Almachius, with full wick' intent,
To slay her in the bath his sondë³⁴ sent.

Three strokës in the neck he smote her tho,³⁵
The tórmentor,³⁶ but for no manner chance
He might not smite her fairë neck in two:
And, for there was that time an ordinance
That no man shouldë do man such penance,³⁷
The fourthë stroke to smitë, soft or sore,
This tórmentor he durstë do no more;

But half dead, with her neckë carven³⁸ there
He let her lie, and on his way is went.
The Christian folk, which that about her were,
With sheetës have the blood full fair y-hent;³⁹
Three dayës lived she in this torment,
And never ceased them the faith to teach,
That she had foster'd them, she gan to preach.

²³ Ignorant.

²⁴ Very, selfsame.

²⁵ Advise.

²⁶ Examine, test.

²⁷ Everywhere; or, above all things.

²⁸ Shut, confine.

²⁹ Kindled, applied.

³⁰ Leave.

³¹ Message, order.

³² Executioner.

³³ Cause such torture, exercise such severity of punishment.

³⁴ Mangled, gashed.

³⁵ Received, caught up.

And then she gave her mebles¹ and her thing,
And to the Pope Urban betook² them tho;³
And said, "I askē this of heaven's king,
To have respite three dayēs and no mo',
To recommend to you, ere that I go,
These soulēs, lo; and that I might do wirc⁴
Here of mine house perpetually a church."

Saint Urban, with his deacons, privily
The body fetch'd, and buried it by night
Among his other saintēs honestly;⁵
Her house the church of Saint Cecilie hight;⁶
Saint Urban hallow'd it, as he well might;
In which unto this day, in noble wise,
Men do to Christ and to his saint service.

THE CANON'S YEOMAN'S TALE.⁷

THE PROLOGUE.

WHEN ended was the life of Saint Cecile,
Ere we had ridden fully fivē mile,⁸
At Boughton-under-Blee us gan o'ertake
A man, that clothed was in clothēs black,
And underneath he wore a white surplice.
His hackenay,⁹ which was all pomely-gris,¹⁰
So sweated, that it wonder was to see;
It seem'd as he had pricked¹¹ milēs three.
The horse eke that his yeoman rode upon
So sweated, that unnethēs¹² might he gon.
About the peytrel¹³ stood the foam full high;
He was of foam as flecked¹⁴ as a pie.
A mailē twyfold¹⁵ on his crupper lay;
It seemed that he carried little array;
All light for summer rode this worthy man.
And in my heart to wonder I began
What that he was, till that I understood
How that his cloak was sewed to his hood;
For which, when I had long advised¹⁶ me,
I deemed him some Canon for to be.
His hat hung at his back down by a lacc,¹⁷
For he had ridden more than trot or pace;
He haddē pricked like as he were wood.¹⁸
A clote-leaf¹⁹ he had laid under his hood,
For sweat, and for to keep his head from heat.
But it was joyē for to see him sweat;
His forehead dropped as a stillatory²⁰
Were full of plantain or of paritory.²¹

¹ Goods, moveables. ² Commended. ³ Then.

⁴ Canse to be established or made.

⁵ Honourably, decorously.

⁶ Is called.

⁷ "The introduction," says Tyrwhitt, "of the Canon's Yeoman to tell a Tale at a time when so many of the original characters remain to be called upon, appears a little extraordinary. It should seem that some sudden resentment had determined Chaucer to interrupt the regular course of his work, in order to insert a satire against the alchemists. That their pretended science was much cultivated about this time, and produced its usual evils, may fairly be inferred from the Act, which was passed soon after, 5 H. IV. c. iv., to make it felony 'to multiply gold or silver, or to use the art of multiplication.'" Tyrwhitt finds in the prologue some colour for the hypothesis that this Tale was intended by Chaucer to begin the return journey from Canterbury; but against this must be set the fact that the Yeoman

And when that he was come, he gan to cry,
"God save," quoth he, "this jolly company.
Fast have I pricked," quoth he, "for your sake,

Because that I would you overtake,
To riden in this merry company."
His Yeoman was eke full of courtesy,
And saidē, "Sirs, now in the morning tide
Out of your hostelry I saw you ride,
And warned here my lord and sovereign,
Which that to ridē with you is full fain,
For his disport; he loveth dalliance."
"Friend, for thy warning God give thee good chance,"²²

Said ourē Host; "certain it wouldē seem
Thy lord were wise, and so I may well deem;
He is full jocund also, dare I lay;
Can he aught tell a merry tale or tway,
With which he gladden may this company?"

"Who, Sir? my lord? Yea, Sir, withoutē lie,
He can²³ of mirth and eke of jollity
Not but²⁴ enough; also, Sir, trustē me,
An'²⁵ ye him knew all so well as do I,
Ye would wonder how well and craftily
He couldē work, and that in sundry wise.
He hath take on him many a great emprise,
Which were full hard for any that is here
To bring about, but²⁶ they of him it lear.²⁷

As homely as he rides amongēs you,
If ye him knew, it would be for your prow:²⁸
Ye wouldē not forego his acquaintānce
For muchē good, I dare lay in balance
All that I have in my possession.

He is a man of high discretiōn.
I warn you well, he is a passing²⁹ man."

"Well," quoth our Host, "I pray thee tell me than,

Is he a clerk,³⁰ or no? Tell what he is."

"Nay, he is greater than a clerk, y-wis,"³¹

Saidē this Yeoman; "and, in wordēs few,
Host, of his craft somewhat I will you shew.

I say, my lord can³² such a subtlety
(But all his craft ye may not weet³³ of me,
And somewhat help I yet to his working),
That all the ground on which we be riding
Till that we come to Canterbury town,
He could all cleanē turnen up so down,
And pave it all of silver and of gold."

And when this Yeoman had this talē told
Unto our Host, he said; "*Ben'dicite!*
This thing is wonder marvellous to me,
Since that thy lord is of so high prudēce,

himself expressly speaks of the distance to Canterbury yet to be ridden.

⁸ From some place which the loss of the Second Nun's Prologue does not enable us to identify.

⁹ Nag.

¹⁰ Dapple-gray.

¹¹ Spurred.

¹² Scarcely.

¹³ The breast-plate of a horse's harness; French, "poitrail."

¹⁴ Spotted.

¹⁵ A double valise; a wallet hanging across the crupper on either side of the horse.

¹⁶ Considered.

¹⁷ Cord.

¹⁸ Mad.

¹⁹ Burdock-leaf.

²⁰ Still.

²¹ Wall-flower.

²² Fortune.

²³ Knows.

²⁴ Not less than.

²⁵ If.

²⁶ Unless.

²⁷ Learn.

²⁸ Advantage.

²⁹ Surpassing, extraordinary.

³⁰ A scholar, or a man in holy orders.

³¹ Certainly.

³² Learn, know.

Because of which men should him reverence,
That of his worship¹ recketh he so lite;²
His overest slop³ it is not worth a mite
As in effect to him, so may I go;⁴
It is all bandy⁵ and to-tore also.
Why is thy lord so sluttish, I thee pray,
And is of power better clothes to bey,⁶
If that his deed accordeth with thy speech?
Tell⁷ me that, and that I thee beseech."

"Why?" quoth this Yeoman, "whereto ask
ye me?"

God help me so, for he shall never thé⁷
(But I will not avow⁸ that I say,
And therefore keep it secret, I you pray);
He is too wise, in faith, as I believe.
Thing that is overdone, it will not prove⁹
Aright, as clerkés say; it is a vice;
Wherefore in that I hold him lew'd¹⁰ and nice.¹¹
For when a man hath over great a wit,
Full oft him happens to misusen it;
So doth my lord, and that me grieveth sore.
God it amend; I can say now no more."

"Thereof no force,¹² good Yeoman," quoth
our Host;

"Since of the conning¹³ of thy lord thou know'st,
Tell how he doth, I pray thee heartily,
Since that he is so crafty and so aly.¹⁴
Where dwell¹⁵ ye, if it to tell¹⁶ be?"
"In the suburbés of a town," quoth he,
"Lurking in hernés¹⁷ and in lanés blind,
Where as these robbers and these thieves by
kind¹⁸

Hold¹⁹ their privy fearful residence,
As they that dar²⁰ not shew their présence,
So far²¹ we, if I shall say the soothé."¹⁷
"Yet," quoth our Host²², "let me talk²³ to thee;
Why art thou so discolour'd of thy face?"
"Peter!"²⁴ quoth he, "God give it hard²⁵ grace,¹⁹
I am so us'd the hot²⁶ fire to blow,
That it hath changed my colour, I trow;
I am not wont in no mirrór to pry,
But swink²⁷ sore, and learn to multiply.²¹
We blunder²⁸ ever, and poren²⁹ in the fire,
And, for all that, we fail of our desire;
For ever we lack our conclusion.
To much³⁰ folk we do³¹ illusion,
And borrow gold, be it a pound or two,
Or ten or twelve, or many summés mo',
And make them weenen,³² at the least³³ way,
That of a pound³⁴ we can mak³⁵ tway.
Yet is it false; and aye we have good hope
It for to do, and after it we grope;³⁶
But that sciéce is so far us befor,

1 Honour, reputation. 2 Little.
3 Upper garment; breeches. 4 Prosper.
5 Soiled, slovenly. 6 Buy.
7 Thrive. 8 Own (to him).
9 Stand the test or proof. 10 Ignorant, stupid.
11 Foolish. 12 No matter. 13 Skill, knowledge.
14 Wise. 15 Corners. 16 Nature.
17 Truth. 18 By Saint Peter!
19 An exclamation of dislike and ill-will; "confound
it!" 20 Labour.
21 Transmute metals, in the attempt to multiply gold
and silver by chemistry. 22 Toil.
23 Pore, peer anxiously. 24 Cause.
25 Fancy. 26 Search, strive.
27 Surely. "Conscius ipse sibi de se putat omnia
dici"—"De Moribus," l. f. dist. 17.

That we may not, although we had it sworn,
It overtake, it slides away so fast;
It will us mak³⁷ beggars at the last."

While this Yeoman was thus in his talking,
This Canon drew him near, and heard all thing
Which this Yeoman spake, for suspición
Of menn³⁸'s speech ever had this Canon:
For Cato saith, that he that guilty is,
Deemeth all things be spoken of him y-wis;³⁷
Because of that he gan so nigh to draw
To his Yeoman, that he heard all his saw;³⁸
And thus he said unto his Yeoman tho;³⁹
"Hold thou thy peace, and speak no wordés
mo' :

For if thou do, thou shalt it dear abie.³⁰
Thou slanderest me here in this company,
And eke discoverest that thou shouldest hide."
"Yea," quoth our Host, "tell on, whatso be-
tide;

Of all his threatening reck not a mite."
"In faith," quoth he, "no more I do but lite."³
And when this Canon saw it would not be
But his Yeoman would tell his privy,
He fled away for very sorrow and shame.

"Ah!" quoth the Yeoman, "here shall rise
a game;³¹

All that I can anon I will you tell,
Since he is gone; the foul³² fiend him quell!³²
For ne'er hereafter will I with him meet,
For penny nor for pound, I you behete.³³
He that me brought³⁴ first unto that game,
Ere that he die, sorrow have he and shame.
For it is earnest³⁴ to me, by my faith;
That feel I well, what so any man saith;
And yet for all my smart, and all my grief,
For all my sorrow, labour, and mischief,³⁵
I could³⁵ never leave it in no wise.
Now would to God my witt³⁶ might suffice
To tellen all that longeth to that art!
But natheless yet will I tell³⁷ part;
Since that my lord is gone, I will not spare;
Such thing as that I know, I will declare."

THE TALE.³⁸

With this Canon I dwelt have seven year,
And of his science am I ne'er the near;³⁷
All that I had I hav³⁸ lost thereby,
And, God wot, so have many more than I.
Where I was wont to be right fresh and gay
Of clothing, and of other good array
Now may I wear an hose upon mine head;

38 Saying. 39 Then.
40 Pay dear for it.
41 Some diversion.
42 Destroy. 43 Promise.
44 A serious matter.
45 Trouble, injury.
46 The Tale of the Canon's Yeoman, like those of the
Wife of Bath and the Pardoner, is made up of two parts;
a long general introduction, and the story proper. In
the case of the Wife of Bath, the interruptions of other
pilgrims, and the autobiographical nature of the dis-
course, recommend the separation of the prologue from
the Tale proper; but in the other cases the introductory
or merely connecting matter ceases wholly where the
opening of "The Tale" has been marked in the
text. 47 Nearer.

And where my colour was both fresh and red,
Now is it wan, and of a leaden hue
(Whoso it useth, sore shall he it rue);
And of my swink¹ yet bleared is mine eye;²
Lo what advantage is to multiply!
That aliding³ science hath me made so bare,
That I have no good,⁴ where that ever I fare;
And yet I am indebted so thereby
Of gold, that I have borrow'd truly,
That, while I live, I shall it quit⁵ never;
Let every man beware by me for ever.
What manner man that casteth⁶ him thereto,
If he continue, I hold his thrift y-do;⁷
So help me God, thereby shall he not win,
But empty his purse, and make his wittes thin.
And when he, through his madness and folly,
Hath lost his owen good through jupartie,⁸
Then he exciteth other men thereto,
To lose their good as he himself hath do'.
For unto shrewes⁹ joy it is and ease
To have their fellows in pain and disease.¹⁰
Thus was I oncs learned of a clerk;
Of that no charge;¹¹ I will speak of our work.

When we be there as we shall exercise
Our elvish¹² craft, we seeme wonder wise,
Our termes be so clerghal and quaint.¹³
I blow the fire till that mine hearte faint.
Why should I tellen each proportiön
Of thinges, which that we work upon,
As on five or six ounces, may well be,
Of silver, or some other quantity?
And busy me to telle you the names,
As orpiment, burnt bones, iron squames,¹⁴
That into powder grounden be full small?
And in an earthen pot how put is all,
And salt y-put in, and also peppere,
Before these powders that I speak of here,
And well y-cover'd with a lamp of glass?
And of much other thing which that there was?
And of the pots and glasses englutting,¹⁵
That of the air might passen out no thing?
And of the easy¹⁶ fire, and smart¹⁷ also,
Which that was made? and of the care and woe
That we had in our matters subliming,
And in amalgaming, and calcining
Of quicksilver, called mercurie crude?
For all our sleightes we can not conclude.
Our orpiment, and sublim'd mercurie,

Our ground litharge¹⁸ eke on the porphyry,
Of each of these of ounces a certain,¹⁹
Not helpeth us, our labour is in vain.
Nor neither our spirites' ascensioün,
Nor our matters that lie all fix'd adown,
May in our working nothing us avail;
For lost is all our labour and travail,
And all the cost, a twenty devil way,
Is lost also, which we upon it lay.

There is also full many another thing
That is unto our craft appertaining,
Though I by order them not rehearse can,
Because that I am a lewde²⁰ man;
Yet will I tell them as they come to mind,
Although I cannot set them in their kind,
As bol-armoniac, verdigris, borace;
And sundry vessels made of earth and glass;
Our urinalës, and our descensories,²¹
Phials, and croslets,²² and sublimatories,
Cucurbitës,²³ and alembikës²⁴ eke,
And other such, dear enough a leek,²⁵
It needeth not for to rehearse them all.
Waters rubifying, and bullës' gall,
Arsenic, sal-armoniac, and brimstone,
And herbës could I tell eke many a one,
As egremoine,²⁶ valerian, and lunary,²⁷
And other such, if that me list to tarry;
Our lampës burning both night and day,
To bring about our craft if that we may;
Our furnace eke of calcinatiön,
And of waters albificatiön,
Unslaked lime, chalk, and glair of an ey,²⁸
Powders diverse, ashes, dung, piss, and clay,
Seared pokettes,²⁹ saltpetre, and vitriol;
And divers fires made of wood and coal;
Sal-tartar, alkali, salt preparate,
And combust matters, and coagulate;
Clay made with horse and manne's hair, and oil
Of tartar, alum, glass, barm, wort, argoil,³⁰
Rosalgar,³¹ and other matters imbibing;
And eke of our matters encorporing,³²
And of our silver citrinatiön,³³
Our cementing, and fermentation,
Our ingots,³⁴ tests, and many thinges mo'.
I will you tell, as was me taught also,
The fourë spirites, and the bodies seven,
By order, as oft I heard my lord them seven.³⁵
The first spirit Quicksilver called is;

¹ By my labour.

² My sight is grown dim; perhaps the phrase has also the metaphorical sense of being deceived or befooled. See note 26, page 64.

³ Slippery, deceptive.

⁴ Property.

⁵ Repay.

⁶ Betaketh; designeth to occupy him in that art.

⁷ His prosperity at an end.

⁸ Jeopardy, hazard. In Froissart's French, "à jeu parti" is used to signify a game or a contest in which the chances were exactly equal for both sides.

⁹ Wicked folk.

¹⁰ Trouble.

¹¹ No matter.

¹² Fantastic, wicked.

¹³ Learned and strange.

¹⁴ Scales; Latin, "squame."

¹⁵ Cementing, sealing up.

¹⁶ Slow.

¹⁷ Quick.

¹⁸ White lead.

¹⁹ A certain number or proportion.

²⁰ Unlearned.

²¹ Vessels for distillation "per descensum;" they were placed under the fire, and the spirit to be extracted was thrown downwards.

²² Crucibles; French, "cresnet."

²³ Retorts; distilling-vessels; so called from their likeness in shape to a gourd—Latin, "cucurbita."

²⁴ Stills, limbecs.

²⁵ At the price of, in exchange for, a leek.

²⁶ Agrimony.

²⁷ Moon-wort.

²⁸ White of egg, glair; French, "glair;" German, "Ei," an egg.

²⁹ The meaning of this phrase is obscure; but if we take the reading "cered poketts," from the Harleian manuscript, we are led to the supposition that it signifies receptacles—bags or pokes—prepared with wax for some process. Latin, "cera," wax.

³⁰ Potter's clay, used for luting or closing vessels in the laboratories of the alchemists; Latin, "argilla;" French, "argile."

³¹ Flowers of antimony.

³² Incorporating.

³³ Turning to a citrine colour, or yellow, by chemical action; that was the colour which proved the philosopher's stone.

³⁴ Not, as in its modern meaning, the masses of metal shaped by pouring into moulds; but the moulds themselves into which the fused metal was poured. Compare Dutch, "ingieten," part. "ingehoten," to infuse; German, "eingliessen," part. "eingegossen," to pour in.

³⁵ Name.

The second Orpiment; the third, y-wis,
Sal-Armoniac, and the fourth Brimstóne.
The bodies sev'n eke, lo them here anon.
Sol gold is, and Luna silvér we threpe;¹
Mars iron, Mercury quicksilver we clope;²
Saturnus lead, and Jupiter is tin,
And Venus copper, by my father's kin.

This cursed craft whoso will exercise,
He shall no good have that him may suffice;
For all the good he spendeth thereabout,
He losë shall, thereof have I no doubt.
Whoso that list to utter³ his folly,
Let him come forth and learn to multiply:
And every man that hath aught in his coffer,
Let him appear, and wax a philosópher;
Ascauncë⁴ that craft is so light to lear.⁵
Nay, nay, God wot, all be he monk or frere,
Priest or canón, or any other wight;
Though he sit at his book both day and night;
In learning of this elvish nicë⁶ lore,
All is in vain; and pardie muchë more,
Is to learn a lew'd⁷ man this subtilty;
Fie! speak not thereof, for it will not be.
And conne he letterure,⁸ or conne he none,
As in effect, he shall it find all one;
For bothë two, by my salvatió, n,
Concluden in multiplicatió n⁹
Alikë well, when they have all y-do;
This is to say, they failë bothë two.
Yet forgot I to makë rehearsále
Of waters corrosive, and of limáile,¹⁰
And of bodies' mollificatió n,
And also of their induratió n,
Oilës, ablutió ns, metál fusible,
To tellen all, would passen any Bible
That owhere¹¹ is; wherefore, as for the best,
Of all these namës now will I me rest;
For, as I trow, I have you told enough
To raise a fiend, all look he ne'er so rough.¹²
Ah! nay, let be; the philosópher's stone,
Elixir call'd, we seekë fast each one;
For had we him, then were we sicker¹³ enow;
But unto God of heaven I make avow,¹⁴
For all our craft, when we have all y-do,
And all our sleight, he will not come us to.
He hath y-made us spendë muchë good,
For sorrow of which almost we waxed wood,¹⁵
But that good hopë creeped in our heart,
Supposing ever, though we sorë smart,
To be relieved by him afterward.
Such súpposing and hope is sharp and hard.
I warn you well it is to seeken ever.
That future *temps*¹⁶ hath madë men dissever,
In trust thereof, from all that ever they had,
Yet of that art they cannot waxë sad,¹⁷
For unto them it is a bitter sweet;

¹ Name; from Anglo-Saxon, "threapian."

² Call.

³ Publish, display.

⁴ As if. See note 20, page 87.

⁵ Easy to learn.

⁶ Fantastic foolish.

⁷ Ignorant.

⁸ Know he letters—be he learned.

⁹ Come to the same result in the pursuit of the art of making gold.

¹⁰ Metal filings; French, "limaille." ¹¹ Anywhere.

¹² Though he look never so grim or fierce.

¹³ Secure.

¹⁴ Confession.

¹⁵ Mad.

¹⁶ Time.

¹⁷ Repentant.

So seemeth it; for had they but a sheet
Which that they mightë wrap them in at night,
And a bratt¹⁸ to walk in by dayëlight,
They would them sell, and spend it on this craft;
They cannot stint,¹⁹ until no thing be left.
And evermore, wherever that they gon,
Men may them knowë by smell of brimstóne;
For all the world they stinken as a goat;
Their savour is so rammish and so hot,
That though a man a milë from them be,
The savour will infect him, trustë me.
Lo, thus by smelling and threadbare array,
If that men list, this folk they knowë may.
And if a man will ask them privily,
Why they be clothed so unthriftilly,²⁰
They right anon will rownen²¹ in his ear,
And sayen, if that they espied were,
Men would them slay, because of their sciënce:
Lo, thus these folk betrayen innocence!

Pass over this; I go my tale unto.
Ere that the pot be on the fire y-do²²
Of metals, with a certain quantity
My lord them tempers,²³ and no man but he
(Now he is gone, I dare say boldëly);
For as men say, he can do craftily,
Algate²⁴ I wot well he hath such a name,
And yet full oft he runneth into blame;
And know ye how? full oft it happ'neth so,
The pot to-breaks, and farewell! all is go'.²⁵
These metals be of so great violence,
Our wallës may not make them résistence,
But if²⁶ they werë wrought of lime and stone;
They piercë so, that through the wall they
gon;
And some of them sink down into the ground
(Thus have we lost by timës many a pound),
And some are scatter'd all the floor about;
Some leap into the roof withoutë doubt.
Though that the fiend not in our sight him shew,
I trowë that he be with us, that shrew;²⁷
In hellë, where that he is lord and sire,
Is there no morë woe, rancóur, nor ire.
When that our pot is broke, as I have said,
Every man chides, and holds him evil apaid.²⁸
Some said it was long on²⁹ the fire-making;
Some saidë nay, it was on the blowing
(Then was I fear'd, for that was mine office);
"Straw!" quoth the third, "ye be lewëd and
nice,³⁰
It was not temper'd³¹ as it ought to be."
"Nay," quoth the fourthë, "stint³² and hearken
me;
Because our fire was not y-made of beech,
That is the cause, and other none, so thé 'ch.³³
I cannot tell whereon it was along,
But well I wot great strife is us among."

¹⁸ Coarse cloak; Anglo-Saxon, "bratt." The word is still used in Lincolnshire, and some parts of the north, to signify a coarse kind of apron.

¹⁹ Cease.

²⁰ Shabbily.

²¹ Whisper.

²² Placed.

²³ Adjusts the proportions.

²⁴ Although.

²⁵ Gone, lost.

²⁶ Unless.

²⁷ Impious wretch.

²⁸ Dissatisfied.

²⁹ In consequence of; the modern vulgar phrase "all along of," or "all along on," best conveys the force of the words in the text.

³⁰ Ignorant and foolish.

³¹ Mixed in due proportions.

³² Stop.

³³ So thé ich—so may I thrive.

"What?" quoth my lord, "there is no more to do'n,

Of these perils I will beware eftsoon.¹

I am right sicker² that the pot was crazed.³

Be as be may, be ye no thing amazed.⁴

As usage is, let sweep the floor as swithe;⁵

Pluck up your heartes and be glad and blithe."

The mullok⁶ on a heap y-sweeped was,

And on the floor y-cast a canēvas,

And all this mullok in a sieve y-throw,

And sifted, and y-picked many a throw.⁷

"Pardie," quoth one, "somewhat of our metál

Yet is there here, though that we have not all.

And though this thing mishapped hath as now,⁸

Another time it may be well enow.

We mustē put our good in ádvéntúre;⁹

A merchant, pardie, may not aye endure,

Trustē me well, in his prosperity:

Sometimes his good is drenched¹⁰ in the sea,

And sometimes comes it safe unto the land."

"Peace," quoth my lord; "the next time I will fand¹¹

To bring our craft all in another plight,¹²

And but I do, Sirs, let me have the wite;¹³

There was default in somewhat, well I wot."

Another said, the fire was over hot.

But be it hot or cold, I dare say this,

That we concluden evermore amiss;

We fail alway of that which we would have;

And in our madness evermore we rave.

And when we be together every one,

Every man seemeth a Solomon.

But all thing, which that shineth as the gold,

It is not gold, as I have heard it told;

Nor every apple that is fair at eye,

It is not good, what so men clap¹⁴ or cry.

Right so, lo, fareth it amongēs us.

He that the wisest seemeth, by Jesús,

Is most fool, when it cometh to the prefe;¹⁵

And he that seemeth truest, is a thief.

That shall ye know, ere that I from you wend;

By that I of my tale have made an end.

There was a canon of religioun

Amongēs us, would infect all a town,

Though it as great were as was Nineveh,

Rome, Alisandre,¹⁶ Troy, or other thre.

His sleightēs¹⁷ and his infinite falsenēss

There couldē no man writen, as I guess,

Though that he mightē live a thousand year;

In all this world of falseness n'is¹⁸ his peer.

For in his termēs he will him so wind,

And speak his wordēs in so sly a kind,

When he communē shall with any wight,

That he will make him doat¹⁹ anon aright,

But²⁰ it a fiendē be, as himself is.

Full many a man hath he beguil'd ere this,

And will, if that he may live any while;

And yet men go and ride many a mile

Him for to seek, and have his acquaintáncē,

Not knowing of his falsē governáncē.²¹

And if you list to give me audiéncē,

I will it tellē here in your preséncē.

But, worshipful canóns religiouns,

Ne deemē not that I slander your house,

Although that my tale of a canon be.

Of every order some shrew is,²² pardie;

And God forbid that all a company

Should rue a singular²³ mannē's folly.

To slander you is no thing mine intent;

But to correct that is amiss I meant.

This talē was not only told for you,

But eke for other more; ye wot well how

That amongēs Christē's apostlēs twelve

There was no traitor but Judas himselve;

Then why should all the remenant have blame,

That guiltless were? By you I say the same.

Save only this, if ye will hearken me,

If any Judas in your convent be,

Removē him betimēs, I you rede,²⁴

If shame or loss may causen any dread.

And be no thing displeased, I you pray;

But in this casē hearken what I say.

In London was a priest, an annualēre,²⁵

That therein dwelled haddē many a year,

Which was so pleasant and so serviccáble

Unto the wife, where as he was at table,

That she would suffer him no thing to pay

For board nor clothing, went he ne'er so gay;

And spending silver had he right enow;

Thereof no force;²⁶ I will proceed as now,

And tellē forth my tale of the canón,

That brought this priestē to confusiún.

This falsē canon came upon a day

Unto the priestē's chamber, where he lay,

Beseeching him to lend him a certáin

Of gold, and he would quit it him again.

"Lend me a mark," quoth he, "but dayēs thre,

And at my day I will it quitē thee.

And if it so be that thou find me false,

Another day hang me up by the halse."²⁷

This priest him took a mark, and that as swithe,²⁸

And this canón him thanked often sithe,²⁹

And took his leave, and wentē forth his way;

And at the thirdē day brought his monēy;

And to the priest he took his gold again,

Whereof this priest was wondrous glad and

fain.³⁰

"Certes," quoth he, "nothing annoyeth me³¹

To lend a man a noble, or two, or three,

Or what thing were in my possessiún,

When he so true is of condition,

That in no wise he breakē will his day;

¹ Again, another time.

² Sure.

³ Cracked; from French, "écraiser" to crack or crush.

⁴ Confounded.

⁵ Quickly.

⁶ Rabbish.

⁷ Time.

⁸ Has gone amiss at present.

⁹ Risk our property.

¹⁰ Drowned, sunk.

¹¹ Endeavour.

¹² To bring our enterprise into a better condition—to a better issue.

¹³ Blame.

¹⁴ Assert, affirm noisily.

¹⁵ Proof, test.

¹⁶ Alexandria.

¹⁷ Cunning tricks.

¹⁸ Is not.

¹⁹ Contract an excessive or foolish fondness for him.

²⁰ Except.

²¹ Deceitful conduct.

²² There is a black sheep in every flock.

²³ Individual, single.

²⁴ Counsel.

²⁵ Employed in singing "annuals" or anniversary masses for the dead, without any cure of souls; the office was such as, in the Prologue to the Tales, Chaucer praises the Parson for not seeking: Nor "ran unto London, unto Saint Paul's, to seekē him a chantery for souls." See page 22.

²⁶ No matter.

²⁷ Neck.

²⁸ Quickly.

²⁹ Times.

³⁰ Pleased.

³¹ I am not at all unwilling.

To such a man I never can say nay."

"What," quoth this canon, "should I be untrue?"

Nay, that were thing y-fallen all of new.¹

Truth is a thing that I will ever keep,

Unto the day in which that I shall creep

Into my grave; and ellës God forbid;

Believë this as sicker² as your creed.

God thank I, and in good time be it said,

That there was never man yet evil apaid³

For gold nor silver that he to me lent,

Nor ever falsehood in mine heart I meant.

And Sir," quoth he, "now of my privity,

Since ye so goodly have been unto me,

And kithed⁴ to me so great gentleness,

Somewhat, to quitë with your kindëness,

I will you shew, and if you list to lear,⁵

I will you teachë plainly the mannëre

How I can worken in philosophy.

Take good heed, ye shall well see at eye⁶

That I will do a mas'try ere I go."

"Yea," quoth the priest; "yea, Sir, and will ye so?"

Mary! thereof I pray you heartily."

"At your commandëment, Sir, truëly,"

Quoth the canón, "and ellës God forbid."

Lo, how this thiefë could his service bedë!⁷

Full sooth it is that such proffër'd service

Stinketh, as witnessë these oldë wise;⁸

And that full soon I will it verify

In this canón, root of all treachery,

That evermore delight had and gladnëss

(Such fiendly thoughtës in his heart impress⁹)

How Christë's people he may to mischief bring.

God keep us from his false dissimulë!

What wistë this priest with whom that he dealt?

Nor of his harm comëg he nothing felt.

O sely¹⁰ priest, O sely innocent!

With covetise anon thou shalt be blent;¹¹

O gracëless, full blind is thy conceit!

For nothing art thou ware of the deceit

Which that this fox y-shapen¹² hath to thee;

His wily wrenches¹³ thou not mayest flee.

Wherefore, to go to the conclusiön

That referreth to thy confusiön,

Unhappy man, anon I will me his¹⁴

To tellë thine unwit¹⁵ and thy folly,

And eke the falseness of that other wretch,

As farforth as that my conning¹⁶ will stretch.

This canon was my lord, ye wouldë ween;¹⁷

Sir Host, in faith, and by the heaven's queen,

It was another canon, and not he,

That can¹⁸ an hundred fold more subtilty.

He hath betrayed folkës many a time;

Of his falsenëss it doleth¹⁹ me to rhyme.

And ever, when I speak of his falsehéad,

For shame of him my cheekës waxë red;

Algatës²⁰ they beginnë for to glow,

For redness have I none, right well I know,

In my visagë; for fumës divërse

Of metals, which ye have me heard rehearse,

Consumed have and wasted my rednëss.

Now take heed of this canon's cursedness.²¹

"Sir," quoth he to the priest, "let your man gon

For quicksilver, that we it had anon;

And let him bringen ounces two or three;

And when he comes, as fastë shall ye see

A wondrous thing, which ye saw ne'er ere this."

"Sir," quoth the priest, "it shall be dona, y-wis."²²

He bade his servant fetchë him this thing,

And he all ready was at his bidding,

And went him forth, and came anon again

With this quicksilver, shortly for to sayn;

And took these ounces three to the canoün;

And he them laidë well and fair adown,

And bade the servant coalës for to bring,

That he anon might go to his working.

The coalës right anon weren y-fet,²³

And this canón y-took a crossëlet²⁴

Out of his bosom, and shew'd to the priest.

"This instrument," quoth he, "which that thou seest,

Take in thine hand, and put thyself therein

Of this quicksilver an ounce, and here begin,

In the name of Christ, to wax a philosópher.

There be full few, which that I wouldë proffer

To shewë them thus much of my sciënce;

For here shall ye see by experiënce

That this quicksilver I will mortify,²⁵

Right in your sight anon withoutë lie,

And make it as good silver, and as fine,

As there is any in your purse, or mine,

Or ellëswhere; and make it malleáble;

And ellës holdë me false and unable

Amongë folk for ever to appear.

I have a powder here that cost me dear,

Shall make all good, for it is cause of all

My conning,²⁶ which that I you shewë shall.

Voidë²⁷ your man, and let him be thereout;

And shut the doorë, while we be about

Our privity, that no man us espy,

While that we work in this philosophy."

All, as he bade, fulfilled was in deed.

This ilkë servant right anon out yede,²⁸

And his master y-shut the door anon,

And to their labour speedily they gon.

This priest, at this cursed canón's bidding,

Upon the fire anon he set this thing,

And blew the fire, and busied him full fast.

And this canón into the croslet cast

A powder, I know not whereof it was

Y-made, either of chalk, either of glass,

Or somewhat ellës, was not worth a fly,

To blinden with²⁹ this priest; and bade him hie³⁰

The coalës for to couchen³¹ all above

The croslet; "for, in token I thee love,"

¹ A new thing to happen.

² Displeased, dissatisfied.

³ Learn.

⁴ Offer.

⁵ Press their way into his heart.

⁶ Blinded; beguiled.

⁷ Stratagems, snares.

⁸ Stupidity.

⁹ Sure.

¹⁰ Shown.

¹¹ With your own eye.

¹² Those wise folk of old.

¹³ Simple.

¹⁴ Contrived.

¹⁵ Hasten.

¹⁶ Imagine.

¹⁷ Knows.

¹⁸ Villainy.

¹⁹ Crucible.

²⁰ A chemical phrase, signifying the dissolution of quicksilver in acid.

²¹ Send out of the way.

²² With which to deceive.

²³ Make haste.

²⁴ Grieveth.

²⁵ Certainly.

²⁶ At least.

²⁷ Fetched.

²⁸ Knowledge.

²⁹ Went.

³⁰ Lay in order.

Quoth this canón, "thine owen handës two
Shall work all thing that herë shall be do'." ¹
"Grand mercy," ² quoth the priest, and was full
glad,
And couch'd the coalës as the canon bade.
And while he busy was, this fiendly wretch,
This false canón (the foulë fiend him fetch),
Out of his bosom took a beechen coal,
In which full subtilly was made a hole,
And therein put was of silver limáile ³
An ounce, and stopped was withoutë fail
The hole with wax, to keep the limaile in.
And understandë, that this falsë gin ⁴
Was not made there, but it was made before ;
And other thingës I shall tell you more,
Hereafterward, which that he with him brought ;
Ere he came there, him to beguile he thought,
And so he did, ere that they went atwin ; ⁵
Till he had turned him, could he not blin. ⁶
It doleth ⁷ me, when that I of him speak ;
On his falsehood fain would I me awreak, ⁸
If I wist how, but he is here and there ;
He is so variant, ⁹ he abides nowhere.

But takë heed, Sirs, now for Goddë's love.
He took his coal, of which I spake above,
And in his hand he bare it privily,
And while the priestë couched busily
The coalës, as I toldë you ere this,
This canon saidë, "Friend, ye do amiss ;
This is not couched as it ought to be,
But soon I shall amenden it," quoth he.
"Now let me meddle therewith but a while,
For of you have I pity, by Saint Gile.
Ye be right hot, I see well how ye sweat ;
Have here a cloth, and wipe away the wet."
And whilë that the priestë wip'd his face,
This canon took his coal,—with sorry grace, ¹⁰—
And layed it above on the midwárd
Of the croslet, and blew well afterward,
Till that the coals begannë fast to brenn. ¹¹
"Now give us drinkë," quoth this canon then,
"And swithe ¹² all shall be well, I undertake.
Sittë we down, and let us merry make."
And whennë that this canon's beechen coal
Was burnt, all the limáile out of the hole
Into the crosset anon fell down ;
And so it mustë needës, by reasoun,
Since it above so even couched ¹³ was ;
But thereof wist the priest no thing, alas !
He deemed all the coals alikë good,
For of the sleight he nothing understood.

And when this alchemister saw his time,
"Rise up, Sir Priest," quoth he, "and stand by
me ;

And, for I wot well ingot ¹⁴ have ye none,
Go, walkë forth, and bring me a chalk stone ;
For I will make it of the samë shape
That is an ingot, if I may have hap.

¹ Done.

² Great thanks.

³ Fillings or dust of silver.

⁴ Contrivance, stratagem.

⁵ Before they separated.

⁶ Cease ; from Anglo-Saxon, "blinnan," to desist.

⁷ Grieveth.

⁸ Revenge myself.

⁹ Changeable, unsettled.

¹⁰ Evil fortune attend him !

¹¹ Burn.

¹² Quickly.

¹³ Evenly or exactly laid.

¹⁴ Mould. See note 84, page 179.

¹⁵ Then.

Bring eke with you a bowl, or else a pan,
Full of watër, and ye shall well see than ¹⁵
How that our business shall hap and preve. ¹⁶
And yet, for ye shall have no misbelieve ¹⁷
Nor wrong conceit of me, in your absénce,
I willë not be out of your presénce,
But go with you, and come with you again."
The chamber-doorë, shortly for to sayn,
They opened and shut, and went their way,
And forth with them they carried the key ;
And came again without any delay.
Why should I tarry all the longë day ?
He took the chalk, and shap'd it in the wise
Of an ingot, as I shall you devise ; ¹⁸
I say, he took out of his owen sleeve
A teine ¹⁹ of silver (evil may he cheve ! ²⁰)
Which that ne was but a just ounce of weight.
And takë heed now of his cursed sleight ;
He shap'd his ingot, in length and in brede ²¹
Of this teinë, withouten any drede, ²²
So sily, that the priest it not espied ;
And in his sleeve again he gan it hide ;
And from the fire he took up his mattëre,
And in th' ingot put it with merry cheer ; ²³
And in the water-vessel he it cast,
When that him list, and bade the priest as fast
Look what there is ; "Put in thine hand and
grobe ; ²⁴

There shalt thou findë silver, as I hope."

What, devil of hellë ! should it ellës be ?

Shaving of silver, silver is, pardie.

He put his hand in, and took up a teine ¹⁹

Of silver fine ; and glad in every vein

Was this priest, when he saw that it was so.

"Goddë's blessing, and his mother's also,

And allë hallow's, ²⁵ have ye, Sir Canón !"

Saidë this priest, "and I their malison ²⁶

But, an' ²⁷ ye vouchësafe to teachë me

This noble craft and this subtilty,

I will be yours in all that ever I may."

Quoth the canón, "Yet will I make assay ²⁸

The second time, that ye may takë heed,

And be expert of this, and, in your need,

Another day assay in mine absénce

This discipline, and this crafty sciénce.

Let take another uncë," quoth he tho, ²⁹

"Of quicksilver, withoutë wordës mo',

And do therewith as ye have done ere this

With that other, which that now silver is."

The priest him busied, all that e'er he can,

To do as this canón, this cursed man,

Commanded him, and fast he blew the fire

For to come to th' effect of his desire.

And this canón right in the meanëwhile

All ready was this priest eft ³⁰ to beguile,

And, for a countenance, ³¹ in his handë bare

An hollow stickë (take keep ³² and beware),

In th' end of which an uncë and no more

¹⁶ Turn out, succeed.

¹⁷ Mistrust.

¹⁸ Describe.

¹⁹ Little piece ; the adjective "tiny" is connected with the word.

²⁰ Prosper ; achieve, end ; French, "achever."

²¹ Breadth.

²² Doubt.

²³ Countenance.

²⁴ Search.

²⁵ That of all the saints.

²⁶ Curse.

²⁷ Unless, if.

²⁸ Trial, experiment.

²⁹ Then.

³⁰ Again.

³¹ Stratagem.

³² Heed.

Of silver limaile put was, as before
 Was in his coal, and stopped with wax well
 For to keep in his limaile every deal.¹
 And while this priest was in his business,
 This canon with his stickē gan him dress²
 To him anon, and his powder cast in,
 As he did erst³ (the devil out of his skin
 Him turn, I pray to God, for his falsehead,
 For he was ever false in thought and deed),
 And with his stick, above the crossēlet,
 That was ordained with that false get,⁴
 He stirr'd the coalēs, till relentē gan
 The wax against the fire, as every man,
 But he a fool be, knows well it must need.
 And all that in the stickē was out yede,⁵
 And in the croalet hastily⁶ it fell.
 Now, goodē Sirs, what will ye bet⁷ than well?
 When that this priest was thus beguil'd again,
 Supposing naught but truthē, sooth to sayn,
 He was so glad, that I can not express
 In no mannere his mirth and his gladnēss;
 And to the canon he proffer'd eftsoon⁸
 Body and good. "Yea," quoth the canon soon,
 "Though poor I be, crafty⁹ thou shalt me find;
 I warn thee well, yet is there more behind.
 Is any copper here within?" said he.
 "Yea, Sir," the priestē said, "I trow there be."
 "Ellēs go buy us some, and that as swithē.¹⁰
 Now, goodē Sir, go forth thy way and hie¹¹
 thee."

He went his way, and with the copper came,
 And this canōn it in his handēs name,¹²
 And of that copper weighed out an ounce.
 Too simple is my tonguē to pronounce,
 As minister of my wit, the doubleness
 Of this canon, root of all cursedness.
 He friendly seem'd to them that knew him not;
 But he was fiendly, both in work and thought.
 It wearieth me to tell of his falsenēss;
 And natheless yet will I it express,
 To that intent men may beware thereby,
 And for none other causē truēly.
 He put this copper in the crossēlet,
 And on the fire as swithe¹³ he hath it set,
 And cast in powder, and made the priest to blow,
 And in his working for to stoopē low,
 As he did erst,¹⁴ and all was but a jape;¹⁴
 Right as him list the priest he made his ape.¹⁵
 And afterward in the ingot he it cast,
 And in the pan he put it at the last
 Of water, and in he put his own hand;
 And in his sleeve, as ye beforēhand
 Heardē me tell, he had a silver teine;¹⁶
 He sliely took it out, this cursed heine¹⁷
 (Unweeting¹⁸ this priest of his false craft),
 And in the pannē's bottom he it laft.¹⁹
 And in the water rumbleth to and fro,
 And wondrous privily took up alsō

¹ Particle. ² Apply. ³ Before.
⁴ Provided with that false contrivance.
⁵ Went. ⁶ Quickly.
⁷ Better. ⁸ Forthwith; again.
⁹ Skillful. ¹⁰ Swiftly. ¹¹ Haste.
¹² Took; from Anglo-Saxon, "niman," to take. Compare German, "nehmen," "nahm."
¹³ Before. ¹⁴ Trick. ¹⁵ Befooled him.
¹⁶ Small piece of silver. ¹⁷ Hind; slave, wretch.

The copper teine (not knowing thilkē priest),
 And hid it, and him hentē²⁰ by the breast,
 And to him spake, and thus said in his game;
 "Stoop now adown; by God, ye be to blame;
 Helpē me now, as I did you whilēre;²¹
 Put in your hand, and lookē what is there."

This priest took up this silver teine anon;
 And thennē said the canon, "Let us gon,
 With these three teinēs which that we have
 wrought,

To some goldsmith, and weet if they be aught:²²
 For, by my faith, I would not for my hood
 But if²³ they werē silver fine and good,
 And that as swithe²⁴ well proved shall it be."
 Unto the goldsmith with these teinēs three
 They went anon, and put them in assay²⁵
 To fire and hammer; might no man say nay,
 But that they weren as they ought to be.
 This sotted²⁶ priest, who gladder was than he?
 Was never bird gladder against the day;
 Nor nightingale in the season of May
 Was never none, that better list to sing;
 Nor lady lustier in carolling,
 Or for to speak of love and womanhead;
 Nor knight in arms to do a hardy deed,
 To standen in grace of his lady dear,
 Than had this priest this craftē for to lear;
 And to the canon thus he spake and said;
 "For love of God, that for us allē died,
 And as I may deserve it unto you,
 What shall this réceipt costē? tell me now."
 "By our Lady," quoth this canon, "it is dear.
 I warn you well, that, save I and a frere,
 In Engleland there can no man it make."
 "No force,"²⁷ quoth he; "now, Sir, for Goddē's
 sake,

What shall I pay? tellē me, I you pray."
 "Y-wis,"²⁸ quoth he, "it is full dear, I say.
 Sir, at one word, if that you list it have,
 Ye shall pay forty pound, so God me save;
 And n'ere²⁹ the friendahip that ye did ere this
 To me, ye shouldē payē more, y-wis."
 This priest the sum of forty pound anon
 Of nobles fet,³⁰ and took them every one
 To this canōn, for this ilkē receipt.
 All his working was but fraud and deceit.
 "Sir Priest," he said, "I keep³¹ to have no
 los³²

Of my craft, for I would it were kept close;
 And as ye lovē me, keep it secrē:
 For if men knewen all my subtlety,
 By God, they wouldē have so great envy
 To me, because of my philosophy,
 I should be dead, there were no other way."
 "God it forbid," quoth the priest, "what ye
 say.

Yet had I lever³³ spenden all the good
 Which that I have (and ellēs were I wood³⁴),

¹⁸ Unsuspecting. ¹⁹ Left.
²⁰ Took. ²¹ Before, erewhile.
²² Of any value. ²³ Unless.
²⁴ Quickly. ²⁵ Proof.
²⁶ Besotted, stupid. ²⁷ No matter.
²⁸ Certainly. ²⁹ Were it not for.
³⁰ Fetched. ³¹ Care.
³² Praise, renown. See note 10, page 155.
³³ Rather. ³⁴ Mad.

Than that ye shouldē fall in such mischief."

"For your good will, Sir, have ye right good prefe,"¹

Quoth the canōn; "and farewell, *grand mercy*."²

He went his way, and never the priest him sey³

After that day; and when that this priest should

Maken assay, at such time as he would, Of this receipt, farewell! it would not be.

Lo, thus bejaped⁴ and beguil'd was he;

Thus madē he⁵ his introduction

To bringē folk to their destruction.

Consider, Sirs, how that in each estate

Betwixtē men and gold there is debate,

So farforth that unnethēs is there none.⁶

This multiplying blint⁷ so many a one,

That in good faith I trowē that it be

The causē greatest of such scarcity.

These philosōphers speak so mistily

In this craft, that men cannot come thereby,

For any wit that men have now-a-days.

They may well chatter, as do thesē jays,

And in their termēs set their lust and pain,⁸

But to their purpose shall they ne'er attain.

A man may lightly⁹ learn, if he have aught,

To multiply, and bring his good to naught.

Lo, such a lucre¹⁰ is in this lusty¹¹ game;

A mannē's mirth it will turn all to grame,¹²

And empty also great and heavy purses,

And makē folkē for to purchase curses

Of them that have thereto their good y-lent.

Oh, fy for shamē! they that have been brent,¹³

Alas! can they not flee the firē's heat?

Ye that it use, I rede¹⁴ that ye it lete,¹⁵

Lest ye lose all; for better than never is late;

Never to thrivē, were too long a date.

Though ye prowle aye, ye shall it never find;

Ye be as bold as is Bayard the blind,

That blunders forth, and peril casteth none;¹⁶

He is as bold to run against a stone,

As for to go beside it in the way:

So farē ye that multiply, I say.

If that your eyen cannot see aright,

Look that your mindē lackē not his sight.

For though you look never so broad, and stare,

Ye shall not win a mite on that chaffare,¹⁷

But wasten all that ye may rape and renn.¹⁸

¹ Good result of your experiments.

² Great thanks.

³ Bewoiled.

⁴ Scarcely is there any (gold).

⁵ Pleasure and exertion.

⁶ Gain, profit.

⁷ Sorrow; Anglo-Saxon, "gram;" German, "Gram."

⁸ Burnt.

⁹ Leave it—that is, the alchemist's art.

¹⁰ Perceives no danger.

¹¹ Seize and plunder; acquire by hook or by crook.

¹² Prosperity.

¹³ Arnaldus Villanovanus, or Arnold de Villeneuve, was a distinguished French chemist and physician of the fourteenth century; his "Rosarium Philosophorum" was a favourite text-book with the alchemists of the generations that succeeded.

¹⁴ Hermes Trismegistus, counsellor of Osiris, King of Egypt, was credited with the invention of writing and hieroglyphics, the drawing up of the laws of the Egyptians, and the origination of many sciences and arts. The Alexandrian school ascribed to him the

¹⁵ Saw.

¹⁶ The false Canon.

¹⁷ Blinds, deceives.

¹⁸ Easily.

¹⁹ Pleasant.

²⁰ German, "Gram."

²¹ Advise.

²² Traffic, commerce.

²³ Except.

²⁴ Quickly.

Withdraw the fire, lest it too fastē brenn;¹⁹

Meddle no morē with that art, I mean;

For if ye do, your thrift²⁰ is gone full clean.

And right as swithe²¹ I will you tellē here

What philosōphers say in this mattēra.

Lo, thus saith Arnold of the newē town,²²

As his Rosāry maketh mentioūn,

He saith right thus, withouten any lie;

"There may no man mercūry mortify,

But²³ it be with his brother's knowledging."

Lo, how that he, which firstē said this thing,

Of philosōphers father was, Hermēs;²⁴

He saith, how that the dragon doubtēless

He dieth not, but if that he be slain

With his brother. And this is for to sayn,

By the dragōn, Mercūry, and none other,

He understood, and Brimstone by his brother,

That out of Sol and Luna were y-draw.²⁵

"And therefore," said he, "take heed to my saw."²⁶

Let no man busy him this art to seech,²⁷

But if²⁸ that he th' intention and speech

Of philosōphers understandē can;

And if he do, he is a lewēd²⁹ man.

For this sciēce and this conning,³⁰ quoth he,

"Is of the secret of secrets³¹ pardie."

Also there was a disciple of Platō,

That on a timē said his master to,

As his book, Senior,³² will bear witness,

And this was his demand in soothfastness:

"Tell me the name of thilkē³³ privy stone."

And Plato answer'd unto him anon;

"Takē the stone that Titanos men name."

"Which is that?" quoth he. "Magnesia is the same."

Saidē Platō. "Yea, Sir, and is it thus?"

This is *ignotum per ignotius*.³⁴

What is Magnesia, good Sir, I pray?"

"It is a water that is made, I say,

Of th' elementēs fourē," quoth Platō.

"Tell me the rootē, good Sir," quoth he tho,³⁵

"Of that watēr, if that it be your will."

"Nay, nay," quoth Plato, "certain that I n'll."³⁶

The philosōphers sworn were every one,

That they should not discover it to none,

Nor in no book it write in no mannere;

For unto God it is so lefe³⁷ and dear,

That he will not that it discover'd be,

But where it liketh to his deity

mystic learning which it amplified; and the scholars of the Middle Ages regarded with enthusiasm and reverence the works attributed to him—notably a treatise on the philosopher's stone.

²⁴ Drawn, derived.

²⁵ Study, explore.

²⁶ Knowledge.

²⁷ Ignorant, foolish.

²⁸ "Secreta Secretorum;" a treatise, very popular in the Middle Ages, supposed to contain the sum of Aristotle's instructions to Alexander. Lydgate translated about half of the work, when his labour was interrupted by his death about 1460; and from the same treatise had been taken most of the seventh book of Gower's "Confessio Amantis."

²⁹ Tyrwhitt says that this book was printed in the "Theatrum Chemicum" under the title, "Senioris Zadith fil. Hamuelis tabula chymica;" and the story here told of Plato and his disciple was there related of Solomon, but with some variations.

³⁰ That.

³¹ To explain the unknown by the more unknown.

³² Then.

³³ Will not.

³⁴ Precious.

Man for to inspire, and eke for to defend¹
Whom that he liketh; lo, this is the end."

Then thus conclude I, since that God of
heaven

Will not that thesē philosophers neven²
How that a man shall come unto this stone,
I rede³ as for the best to let it gon.
For whoso maketh God his adversary,
As for to work any thing in contrary
Of his will, certes never shall he thrive,
Though that he multiply term of his live.⁴
And there a point;⁵ for ended is my tale.
God send ev'ry good man boot of his bale.⁶

THE MANCIPLE'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.

WERT⁷ ye not where there stands a little town,
Which that y-called is Bob-up-and-down,⁸
Under the Blee, in Canterbury way?
There gan our Hostē for to jape and play,
And saidē, "Sirs, what? Dun is in the mire."⁹
Is there no man, for prayer nor for hire,
That will awaken our fellow behind?
A thief him might full lightly¹⁰ rob and bind.
See how he nappeth, see, for cockē's bones,
As he would fallē from his horse at ones.
Is that a Cook of London,¹¹ with mischance?
Do¹² him come forth, he knoweth his penance;
For he shall tell a talē, by my fay,¹³
Although it be not worth a bottle hay.
Awake, thou Cook," quoth he; "God give thee
sorrow!

What aileth thee to sleepē by the morrow?¹⁴
Hast thou had fleas all night, or art thou drunk?
Or hast thou with some quean all night
y-swunk,¹⁵

So that thou mayest not hold up thine head?"

The Cook, that was full pale and nothing red,
Said to our Host, "So God my soulē bless,
As there is fall'n on me such heaviness,
I know not why, that me were lever¹⁶ sleep,
Than the best gallon wine that is in Cheap."

"Well," quoth the Manciple, "if it may do
ease

¹ Protect.

² Name.

³ Counsel.

⁴ Though he pursue the alchemist's art all his days.

⁵ An end.

⁶ Remedy for his sorrow or trouble.

⁷ Know.

⁸ Mr Wright supposes this to be the village of Harbledown, near Canterbury, which is situated on a hill, and near which there are many ups and downs in the road. Like Boughton, where the Canon and his Yeoman overtook the pilgrims, it stood on the skirts of the Kentish forest of Blean or Blee.

⁹ A proverbial saying. "Dun" is a name for an ass, derived from his colour.

¹⁰ Easily.

¹¹ The mention of the Cook here, with no hint that he had already told a story, confirms the indication given by the imperfect condition of his Tale (page 60), that Chaucer intended to suppress the Tale altogether, and make him tell a story in some other place.

¹² Make.

¹³ Faith.

¹⁴ In the day time.

¹⁵ Laboured.

¹⁶ Preferable.

¹⁷ Are dim.

¹⁸ Flattered.

To thee, Sir Cook, and to no wight displease
Which that here rideth in this company,
And that our Host will of his courtesy,
I will as now excuse thee of thy tale;
For in good faith thy visage is full pale:
Thine eyen dazē,¹⁷ soothly as me thinketh,
And well I wot, thy breath full sourē stinketh,
That sheweth well thou art not well disposed;
Of me certain thou shalt not be y-glosed.¹⁸
See how he yawneth, lo, this drunken wight,
As though he would us swallow anon right.
Hold close thy mouth, man, by thy father's kin;
The devil of hellē set his foot therein!
Thy cursed breath infectē will us all:
Fy! stinking swine, fy! foul may thee befall.
Ah! takē heed, Sirs, of this lusty man.
Now, sweetē Sir, will ye joust at the fan?¹⁹
Thereto, me thinketh, ye be well y-shape.
I trow that ye have drunken wine of ape,²⁰
And that is when men playē with a straw."

And with this speech the Cook waxed all
wraw,²¹

And on the Manciple he gan nod fast
For lack of speech; and down his horse him
cast,

Where as he lay, till that men him up took.

This was a fair chevachie²² of a cook:

Alas! that he had held him by his ladle!

And ere that he again were in the saddle

There was great shoving bothē to and fro

To lift him up, and muchē care and woe,

So unwieldy was this silly paled ghost.

And to the Manciple then spake our Host:

"Because that drink hath domination

Upon this man, by my salvation

I trow he lewedly²³ will tell his tale.

For were it wine, or old or moisty²⁴ ale,

That he hath drunk, he speaketh in his nose,

And sneezeth fast, and eke he hath the pose.²⁵

He also hath to do more than enough

To keep him on his capel²⁶ out of the slough;

And if he fall from off his capel eftsoon,²⁷

Then shall we allē have enough to do'n

In lifting up his heavy drunken corse.

Tell on thy tale, of him make I no force.²⁸

But yet, Manciple, in faith thou art too nice²⁹

Thus openly to reprove him of his vice;

Another day he will paraventūre

Reclaimē thee, and bring thee to the lure;³⁰

¹⁹ The quintain; called "fan" or "vane," because it turned round like a weather-cock.

²⁰ Referring to the classification of wine, according to its effects on a man, given in the old "Calendrier des Bergiers." The man of choleric temperament has "wine of lion;" the sanguine, "wine of ape;" the phlegmatic, "wine of sheep;" the melancholic, "wine of sow." There is a Rabbinical tradition that, when Noah was planting vines, Satan slaughtered beside them the four animals named; hence the effect of wine in making those who drink it display in turn the characteristics of all the four.

²¹ Wroth.

²² Cavalry expedition.

²³ Stupidly.

²⁴ New. See note 9, page 22.

²⁵ A defluxion or rheum which stops the nose and obstructs the voice.

²⁶ Horse.

²⁷ Again.

²⁸ I take no account.

²⁹ Foolish.

³⁰ A phrase in hawking—to recall a hawk to the fist; the meaning here is, that the Cook may one day bring the Manciple to account, or pay him off, for the rebuke of his drunkenness.

I mean, he speakē will of smallē things,
As for to pinchen at¹ thy reckonings,
That were not honest, if it came to profe."²

Quoth the Manciple, "That were a great mischief;
So might he lightly bring me in the snare.
Yet had I lever³ payē for the mare
Which he rides on, than he should with me
strive.

I will not wrathē⁴ him, so may I thrive;
That that I spake, I said it in my bourde.⁵
And weest ye what? I have here in my gourd
A draught of wine, yea, of a ripē grape,
And right anon ye shall see a good jape.⁶
This Cook shall drink thereof, if that I may;
On pain of my life he will not say nay."
And certainly, to tellen as it was,
Of this vessel the cook drank fast (alas!
What needed it? he drank enough befor),
And when he haddē pouped in his horn,⁷
To the Manciple he took the gourd again.
And of that drink the Cook was wondrous fain,
And thanked him in such wise as he could.

Then gan our Host to laughē wondrous loud,
And said, "I see well it is necessary
Where that we go good drink with us to carry;
For that will turnē rancour and disease.⁸
T' accord and love, and many a wrong appease.
O Bacchus, Bacchus, blessed be thy name,
That so canst turnen earnest into game!
Worship and thank be to thy deity.
Of that mattēre ye get no more of me.
Tell on thy tale, Manciple, I thee pray."
"Well, Sir," quoth he, "now hearken what I
say."

THE TALE.⁹

When Phœbus dwelled here in earth adown,
As oldē bookēs makē mentioún,
He was the mostē lusty¹⁰ bachelor
Of all this world, and eke the best archér.
He slew Python the serpent, as he lay
Sleeping against the sun upon a day;
And many another noble worthy deed
He with his bow wrought, as men mayē read.
Playen he could on every minstrelsy,
And singē, that it was a melody
To hearken of his clearē voice the soun'.
Certes the king of Thebes, Amphioún,
That with his singing walled the city,
Could never singē half so well as he.
Thereto he was the seemliestō man
That is, or was since that the world began;
What needeth it his features to describe?
For in this world is none so fair alive.
He was therewith full fill'd of gentleness,
Of honour, and of perfect worthiness.

¹ Take exception to, pick flaws in.

² Proof, test.

⁴ Provoke,

⁶ Trick.

⁷ Blown into his horn; a metaphor for belching.

⁸ Trouble, annoyance.

⁹ "The fable of 'The Crow,'" says Tyrwhitt, "which is the subject of the Manciple's Tale, has been related by so many authors, from Ovid down to Gower, that it is impossible to say whom Chaucer principally followed.

³ Rather.

⁵ Jest.

This Phœbus, that was flower of bach'lery,
As well in freedom¹¹ as in chivalry,
For his disport, in sign eke of victōry
Of Python, so as telleth us the story,
Was wont to bearen in his hand a bow.
Now had this Phœbus in his house a crow,
Which in a cage he foster'd many a day,
And taught it speaken, as men teach a jay.
White was this crow, as is a snow-white
swan,

And counterfeit the speach of every man
He couldē, when he shouldē tell a tale.
Therewith in all this world no nightingale
Ne couldē by an hundred thousand deal¹²
Singē so wondrous merrily and well.
Now had this Phœbus in his house a wife,
Which that he loved morē than his life,
And night and day did ever his diligence
Her for to please, and do her reverence:
Save only, if that I the sooth shall sayn,
Jealous he was, and would have kept her fain.
For him were loth y-japed¹³ for to be;
And so is every wight in such degree;
But all for nought, for it availeth nought.
A good wife, that is clean of work and thought,
Should not be kept in none await¹⁴ certāin:
And truēly the labour is in vain
To keep a shrewē,¹⁵ for it will not be.
This hold I for a very nicety,¹⁶
To spillē¹⁷ labour for to keepē wives;
Thus writen oldē clerkēs in their lives.

But now to purpose, as I first began.
This worthy Phœbus did all that he can
To pleasē her, weening, through such pleasānce,
And for his manhood and his governānce,
That no man should have put him from her
grace;

But, God it wot, there may no man embrace
As to distraín¹⁸ a thing, which that natūre
Hath naturally set in a creatūre.
Take any bird, and put it in a cage,
And do all thine intent, and thy corāge,¹⁹
To foster it tenderly with meat and drink
Of allē dainties that thou canst bethink,
And keep it all so cleanly as thou may;
Although the cage of gold be never so gay,
Yet had this bird, by twenty thousand fold,
Lever²⁰ in a forēst, both wild and cold,
Go eatē wormēs, and such wretchedness.
For ever this bird will do his business
T' escape out of his cage when that he may:
His liberty the bird desireth aye.²¹
Let take a cat, and foster her with milk
And tender flesh, and make her couch of silk,
And let her see a mouse go by the wall,
Anon she weiveth²² milk, and flesh, and all,
And every dainty that is in that house,
Such appetite hath she to eat the mouse.

His skill in new dressing an old story was never, perhaps, more successfully exerted."

¹⁰ Pleasant.

¹¹ Generosity.

¹² Part.

¹³ Tricked, deceived.

¹⁴ Observation, espionage.

¹⁵ A contrarious or ill-disposed woman.

¹⁶ Sheer folly.

¹⁷ Lose.

¹⁸ Succeed in constraining.

¹⁹ All that thy heart prompts.

²⁰ See the parallel to this passage in the Squire's Tale, and note 6, page 121.

²¹ Forsaketh.

Lo, here hath kind¹ her domination,
 And appetite flemeth² discretión.
 A she-wolf hath also a villain's kind;¹
 The lewedest³ wolf that she may find,
 Or least of reputation, will she take
 In timē when her lust³ to have a make.⁴
 All these examples speak I by⁵ these men
 That be untrue, and nothing by womén.
 For men have ever a lik'rous appetite
 On lower things to perform their delight
 Than on their wivēs, be they never so fair,
 Never so truē, nor so debonair.⁶
 Flesh is so newēfangled, with mischance,⁷
 That we can in no thingē have pleasánce
 That souneth⁸ unto virtue any while.

This Phœbus, which that thought upon no
 guile,
 Deceived was for all his jollitý;
 For under him another haddē she,
 A man of little reputatiún,
 Nought worth to Phœbus in comparison.
 The more harm is; it happens often so,
 Of which there cometh muchē harm and
 woe.

And so befell, when Phœbus was absént,
 His wife anon hath for her leman⁹ sent.
 Her leman! certes that is a knavish speech.
 Forgive it me, and that I you beseech.
 The wisē Plato saith, as ye may read,
 The word must needs accordē with the deed;
 If men shall tellē properly a thing,
 The word must cousin be to the working.
 I am a boistous¹⁰ man, right thus I say.
 There is no differencē truēly
 Betwixt a wife that is of high degree
 (If of her body dishonést she be),
 And any poorē wench, other than this
 (If it so be they workē both amiss),
 But, for¹¹ the gentle is in estate above,
 She shall be call'd his lady and his love;
 And, for that other is a poor womán,
 She shall be call'd his wench and his lemán:
 And God it wot, mine owen dearē brother,
 Men lay the one as low as lies the other.
 Right so betwixt a titleless tyránt¹²
 And an outlaw, or else a thief erránt,¹³
 The same I say, there is no differéce
 (To Alexander told was this sentéce),
 But, for the tyrant is of greater might
 By force of meinie¹⁴ for to slay downright,
 And burn both house and home, and make all
 plain,¹⁵

Lo, therefore is he call'd a capitáin;
 And, for the outlaw hath but small meinie,
 And may not do so great an harm as he,
 Nor bring a country to so great mischief,
 Men callē him an outlaw or a thief.
 But, for I am a man not textuel,¹⁶

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1 Nature. | 8 Drives out. |
| 2 She desires. | 4 Mate. |
| 3 With reference to. | 6 Gentle, mild. |
| 7 Ill luck to it. | 8 Is consonant to, accords with. |
| 9 Unlawful lover. | 10 Rough-spoken, downright. |
| 11 Because. | 12 Usurper. |
| 14 Followers, people. | 13 Wandering. |
| 16 Well stored with texts or citations. | 15 Level. |
| 18 Light or rash pleasure. | 17 Whit. |
| 20 Thou art befooled or betrayed. | 19 Watching. |

I will not tell of texts never a deal;¹⁷
 I will go to my tale, as I began.

When Phœbus' wife had sent for her lemán,
 Anon they wroughten all their lust volage.¹⁸
 This whitē crow, that hung aye in the cage,
 Beheld their work, and said never a word;
 And when that home was come Phœbus the
 lord,

This crowē sung, "Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo!"
 "What? bird," quoth Phœbus, "what song
 sing'st thou now?"

Wert thou not wont so merrily to sing,
 That to my heart it was a réjoicing
 To hear thy voice? alas! what song is this?"
 "By God," quoth he, "I singē not amiss.
 Phœbus," quoth he, "for all thy worthiness,
 For all thy beauty, and all thy gentleness,
 For all thy song, and all thy minstrelsy,
 For all thy waiting,¹⁹ bleared is thine eye²⁰
 With one of little reputatiún,

Not worth to thee, as in comparison,
 The mountance²¹ of a gnat, so may I thrive;
 For on thy bed thy wife I saw him swive."
 What will ye more? the crow anon him told,
 By sadē²² tokens, and by wordēs bold,
 How that his wife had done her lechery,
 To his great shame and his great villainy;
 And told him oft, he saw it with his eyen.
 This Phœbus gan awayward for to wrien;²³
 Him thought his woeful heartē burst in two.
 His bow he bent, and set therein a flo,²⁴
 And in his ire he hath his wifē alain;
 This is th' effect, there is no more to sayn.
 For sorrow of which he brake his minstrelsy,
 Both harp and lute, gitern²⁵ and pealtery;
 And eke he brake his arrows and his bow;
 And after that thus spake he to the crow.

"Traitor," quoth he, "with tongue of scor-
 piún,
 Thou hast me brought to my confusiún;
 Alas that I was wrought!²⁶ why n'ere²⁷ I dead?
 O dearē wife, O gem of lustihead,²⁸
 That wert to me so sad,²⁹ and eke so true,
 Now liest thou dead, with facē pale of hue,
 Full guiltēless, that durst I swear y-wis!³⁰
 O rakel³¹ hand, to do so foul amiss!³²
 O troubled wit, O irē reckēless,
 That unadvised smit'st the guiltēless!
 O wantrust,³³ full of false suspiciún!
 Where was thy wit and thy discretión?
 O! every man beware of rakelness,³⁴
 Nor trow³⁵ no thing withoutē strong witnēss.
 Smite not too soon, ere that ye weetē³⁶ why,
 And be advised³⁷ well and sickerly³⁸
 Ere ye do any executiún
 Upon your irē³⁹ for suspiciún.
 Alas! a thousand folk hath rakel ire
 Foulylly fordōne, and brought them in the mire.

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| 21 Value. | 23 To turn aside. |
| 22 Grave, trustworthy. | 25 Guitar. |
| 24 Arrow; Anglo-Saxon, "fla." | 26 Pleasantness. |
| 26 Created. | 27 Was not. |
| 29 Steadfast. | 30 Certainly. |
| 31 So foully wrong. | 31 Rash, hasty. |
| 32 Distrust—want of trust; so "wanhope," despair—
want of hope. | 34 Rashness. |
| 35 Know. | 35 Believe. |
| 37 Consider. | 36 Surely. |
| 39 Take any action upon your anger. | |

Alas! for sorrow I will myselfe slé."¹
 And to the crow, "O falsē thief," said he,
 "I will thee quite anon thy falsē tale.
 Thou sung whilom² like any nightingale,
 Now shalt thou, falsē thief, thy song foregon,³
 And eke thy whitē feathers every one,
 Nor ever in all thy lifē shalt thou speak;
 Thus shall men on a traitor be awreak.⁴
 Thou and thine offspring ever shall be blake,⁵
 Nor ever sweetē noisē shall ye make,
 But ever cry against⁶ tempēst and rain,
 In token that through thee my wife is alain."
 And to the crow he start,⁷ and that anon,
 And pull'd his whitē feathers every one,
 And made him black, and reft him all his song,
 And eke his speech, and out at door him flung
 Unto the devil, which I him betake;⁸
 And for this causē be all crowēs blake.
 Lordings, by this ensample, I you pray,
 Beware, and takē keep⁹ what that ye say;
 Nor tellē never man in all your life
 How that another man hath dight his wife;
 He will you hatē mortally certāin.
 Dan Solomon, as wisē clerkēs sayn,
 Teacheth a man to keep his tonguē well;
 But, as I said, I am not textuel.
 But natheless thus taughtē me my dame;
 "My son, think on the crow, in Goddē's name.
 My son, keep well thy tongue, and keep thy
 friend;

A wicked tongue is worse than is a fiend:
 My sonē, from a fiend men may them bless.¹⁰
 My son, God of his endēless goodnēss
 Walled a tongue with teeth, and lippēs eke,
 For¹¹ man should him advisē,¹² what he speak.
 My son, full often for too muchē speech
 Hath many a man been spilt,¹³ as clerkēs teach;
 But for a little speech advisedly
 Is no man shent,¹⁴ to speak generally.
 My son, thy tonguē shouldest thou restrain
 At allē time, but¹⁵ when thou dost thy pain¹⁶
 To speak of God in honour and prayēre.
 The firstē virtue, son, if thou wilt lear,¹⁷
 Is to restrain and keepē well thy tongue;¹⁸
 Thus learnē children, when that they be young.
 My son, of muchē speaking evil advis'd,
 Where lessē speaking had enough suffic'd,
 Cometh much harm; thus was me told and
 taught;
 In muchē speechē sinnē wanteth nót.
 Wost¹⁹ thou whereof a rakel²⁰ tonguē serveth?
 Right as a sword forcutteth and forcerveth
 An arm in two, my dearē son, right so
 A tonguē cutteth friendship all in two.
 A jangler²¹ is to God abomināble.
 Read Solomon, so wise and honourāble;

1 Slay. 2 Once on a time. 3 Black.
 4 Lose. 5 Revenged. 6 Sprang.
 7 Before, in warning of. 8 To whom I commend him. 9 Heed.
 10 Defend by crossing themselves. 11 Because.
 12 Consider. 13 Destroyed. 14 Ruined.
 15 Except. 16 Makest thy best effort.
 17 Learn.
 18 This is quoted in the French "Romance of the Rose," from Cato "De Moribus," l. i., dist. 3: "Virtutem primam esse puta compescere linguam."
 19 Knowest. 20 Hasty.
 21 Prating man.

Read David in his Psalms, and read Senec'.
 My son, speak not, but with thine head thou
 beck,²²
 Dissimule as thou wert²³ deaf, if that thou
 hear
 A jangler speak of perilous mattēre.
 The Fleming saith, and learn if that thee leat,²⁴
 That little jangling causeth muchē rest.
 My son, if thou no wicked word hast said,
 Thee thar not dreadē²⁵ for to be bewray'd;
 But he that hath missaid, I dare well sayn,
 He may by no way call his word again.
 Thing that is said is said, and forth it go'th,²⁶
 Though him repent, or be he ne'er so loth;
 He is his thrall,²⁷ to whom that he hath said
 A tale, of which he is now evil apaid.²⁸
 My son, beware, and be no author new
 Of tidings, whether they be false or true;²⁹
 Whereso thou come, amongēs high or low,
 Keep well thy tongue, and think upon the
 crow."

THE PARSON'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE.

By that the Manciple his tale had ended,
 The sunnē from the south line was descended
 So lowē, that it was not to my sight
 Degreēs nine-and-twenty as in height.
 Four of the clock it was then, as I guess,
 For eleven foot, a little more or less,
 My shadow was at thilkē time, as there,
 Of such feet as my lengthē parted were
 In six feet equal of proportiō.
 Therewith the moonē's exaltatiō,³⁰
 In meanē³¹ Libra, gan alway ascend,
 As we were ent'ring at a thorpē's³² end.
 For which our Host, as he was wont to gie,³³
 As in this case, our jolly company,
 Said in this wisē; "Lordings every one,
 Now lacketh us no morē tales than one.
 Fulfill'd is my sentēce and my decree;
 I trow that we have heard of each degree.³⁴
 Almost fulfilled is mine ordinance;
 I pray to God so give him right good chance
 That telleth us this talē lustily.
 Sir Priest," quoth he, "art thou a vicary?³⁵
 Or art thou a Parson? say sooth by thy fay.³⁶
 Be what thou be, breakē thou not our play;³⁷
 For every man, save thou, hath told his tale.
 Unbuckle, and shew us what is in thy mail.³⁸
 For truēly me thinketh by thy cheer

22 Beckon, make gestures. 23 Feign to be.
 24 It please thee. 25 Thou hast no need to fear.
 26 — "Semel emissum volat irrevocabile verbum."
 — HORACE, Epist. i., 18, 71.
 27 Slave. 28 Which he now regrets.
 29 This caution is also from Cato "De Moribus," l. i.,
 dist. 12: "Rumoris fuge ne incipias novus auctor
 haberi."
 30 Rising. 31 In the middle of.
 32 Village's. 33 Govern.
 34 From each class or rank in the company.
 35 Vicar. 36 Faith.
 37 Interrupt not our diversion. 38 Wallet.

Thou shouldest knit up well a great mattère.
Tell us a fable anon, for cocke's bones."

This Parson him answered all at ones ;
"Thou gettest fable none y-told for me,
For Paul, that writeth unto Timothy,
Reproveth them that weivē soothfastness,¹
And tellē fables, and such wretchedness.
Why should I sowē draff² out of my fist,
When I may sowē wheat, if that me list?
For which I say, if that you list to hear
Morality and virtuous mattère,
And then that ye will give me audiēce,
I would full fain at Ochrise's reverēce
Do you pleasānce lawful, as I can.
But, trustē well, I am a southern man,
I cannot gest,³ rom, ram, ruf,⁴ by my letter ;
And, God wot, rhyme hold I but little
better.

And therefore if you list, I will not glose,⁵
I will you tell a little tale in prose,
To knit up all this feast, and make an
end.

And Jesus for his gracē wit me send
To shewē you the way, in this voyage,
Of thilkē perfect glorious pilgrimage,⁶
That hight Jerusalem celestīal.
And if ye vouchēsafe, anon I shall
Begin upon my tale, for which I pray
Tell your advice,⁷ I can no better say.
But natheless this meditaciōn
I put it aye under correctiōn
Of clerkēs,⁸ for I am not textuel ;
I take but the sentēncē,⁹ trust me well.
Therefore I make a protestaciōn,
That I will standē to correctiōn."

Upon this word we have assented soon ;
For, as us seemed, it was for to do'n,¹⁰
To enden in some virtuous sentēncē,¹¹
And for to give him space and audiēce ;
And bade our Host he shoulde to him say,
That allē we to tell his tale him pray.
Our Hostē had the wordēs for us all :
"Sir Priest," quoth he, "now fairē you be-
fall ;
Say what you list, and we shall gladly hear."
And with that word he said in this mannere ;
"Tellē," quoth he, "your meditaciōn,
But hasten you, the sunnē will adown.
Be fructuous,¹² and that in little space ;
And to do well God sendē you his grace."

¹ Forsake truth.

² Chaff, refuse.

³ Relate stories.

⁴ A contemptuous reference to the alliterative poetry which was at that time very popular, in preference even, it would seem, to rhyme, in the northern parts of the country, where the language was much more barbarous and unpolished than in the south.

⁵ Mince matters, make false pretensions or promises.

⁶ The word is used here to signify the shrine, or destination, to which pilgrimage is made.

⁷ Opinion. ⁸ Scholars. ⁹ Meaning, sense.

¹⁰ A thing worth doing, that ought to be done.

¹¹ Discourse.

¹² Fruitful ; profitable.

¹³ The Parson's Tale is believed to be a translation, more or less free, from some treatise on penitence that was in favour about Chaucer's time. Tyrwhitt says : "I cannot recommend it as a very entertaining or edifying performance at this day ; but the reader will please to remember, in excuse both of Chaucer and of

THE TALE.¹³

[The Parson begins his "little treatise" (which, if given at length, would extend to about thirty of these pages, and which cannot by any stretch of courtesy or fancy be said to merit the title of a "Tale") in these words :—]

Our sweet Lord God of Heaven, that no man will perish, but will that we come all to the knowledge of him, and to the blissful life that is perdurable,¹⁴ admonishes us by the prophet Jeremiah, that saith in this wise : "Stand upon the ways, and see and ask of old paths, that is to say, of old sentences, which is the good way, and walk in that way, and ye shall find refreshing for your souls,"¹⁵ &c. Many be the spiritual ways that lead folk to our Lord Jesus Ochrise, and to the reign of glory ; of which ways there is a full noble way, and full convenable, which may not fail to man nor to woman, that through sin hath misgone from the right way of Jerusalem celestial ; and this way is called penitence. Of which men should gladly hearken and inquire with all their hearts, to wit what is penitence, and whence it is called penitence, and in what manner, and in how many manners, be the actions or workings of penitence, and how many species there be of penitences, and what things appertain and behove to penitence, and what things disturb penitence.

[Penitence is described, on the authority of Saints Ambrose, Isidore, and Gregory, as the bewailing of sin that has been wrought, with the purpose never again to do that thing, or any other thing which a man should bewail ; for weeping and not ceasing to do the sin will not avail—though it is to be hoped that after every time that a man falls, be it ever so often, he may find grace to arise through penitence. And repentant folk that leave their sin ere sin leave them, are accounted by Holy Church sure of their salvation, even though the repentance be at the last hour. There are three actions of penitence : that a man be baptized after he has sinned ; that he do no deadly sin after receiving baptism ; and that he fall into no venial sins from day to day. "Thereof saith St Augustine, that penitence of good and humble folk is the penitence of every day." The species of peni-

his editor, that, considering The Canterbury Tales as a great picture of life and manners, the piece would not have been complete if it had not included the religion of the time." The Editor of the present volume has followed the same plan adopted with regard to Chaucer's Tale of Melibee, and mainly for the same reasons. (See note 20, page 149.) An outline of the Parson's ponderous sermon—for such it is—has been drawn ; while those passages have been given in full which more directly illustrate the social and the religious life of the time—such as the picture of hell, the vehement and rather coarse, but, in an antiquarian sense, most curious and valuable attack on the fashionable garb of the day, the catalogue of venial sins, the description of gluttony and its remedy, &c. The brief third or concluding part, which contains the application of the whole, and the "Retraction" or "Prayer" that closes the Tale and the entire "magnum opus" of Chaucer, have been given in full.

¹⁴ Everlasting.

¹⁵ Jeremiah vi. 16.

tence are three : solemn, when a man is openly expelled from Holy Church in Lent, or is compelled by Holy Church to do open penance for an open sin openly talked of in the country ; common penance, enjoined by priests in certain cases, as to go on pilgrimage naked or barefoot ; and privy penance, which men do daily for private sins, of which they confess privately and receive private penance. To very perfect penitence are behoveful and necessary three things : contrition of heart, confession of mouth, and satisfaction ; which are fruitful penitence against delight in thinking, reckless speech, and wicked sinful works.

Penitence may be likened to a tree, having its root in contrition, hiding itself in the heart as a tree-root does in the earth ; out of this root springs a stalk, that bears branches and leaves of confession, and fruit of satisfaction. Of this root also springs a seed of grace, which is mother of all security, and this seed is eager and hot ; and the grace of this seed springs of God, through remembrance on the day of judgment and on the pains of hell. The heat of this seed is the love of God, and the desire of everlasting joy ; and this heat draws the heart of man to God, and makes him hate his sin. Penance is the tree of life to them that receive it. In penance or contrition man shall understand four things : what is contrition ; what are the causes that move a man to contrition ; how he should be contrite ; and what contrition availeth to the soul. Contrition is the heavy and grievous sorrow that a man receiveth in his heart for his sins, with earnest purpose to confess and do penance, and never more to sin. Six causes ought to move a man to contrition : 1. He should remember him of his sins ; 2. He should reflect that sin putteth a man in great thralldom, and all the greater the higher is the estate from which he falls ; 3. He should dread the day of doom and the horrible pains of hell ; 4. The sorrowful remembrance of the good deeds that a man hath omitted to do here on earth, and also the good that he hath lost, ought to make him have contrition ; 5. So also ought the remembrance of the passion that our Lord Jesus Christ suffered for our sins ; 6. And so ought the hope of three things, that is to say, forgiveness of sin, the gift of grace to do well, and the glory of heaven with which God shall reward man for his good deeds.—All these points the Parson illustrates and enforces at length ; waxing especially eloquent under the third head, and plainly setting forth the sternly realistic notions regarding future punishments that were entertained in the time of Chaucer :¹—]

Certes, all the sorrow that a man might make from the beginning of the world, is but a little thing, at regard of² the sorrow of hell. The

cause why that Job calleth hell the land of darkness ;³ understand, that he calleth it land or earth, for it is stable and never shall fail, and dark, for he that is in hell hath default⁴ of light natural ; for certes the dark light, that shall come out of the fire that ever shall burn, shall turn them all to pain that be in hell, for it sheweth them the horrible devils that them torment. Covered with the darkness of death ; that is to say, that he that is in hell shall have default of the sight of God ; for certes the sight of God is the life perdurable.⁵ The darkness of death, be the sins that the wretched man hath done, which that disturb⁶ him to see the face of God, right as a dark cloud doth between us and the sun. Land of misere, because there be three manner of defaults against three things that folk of this world have in this present life ; that is to say, honours, delights, and riches. Against honour have they in hell shame and confusion : for well ye wot, that men call honour the reverence that man doth to man ; but in hell is no honour nor reverence ; for certes no more reverence shall be done there to a king than to a knave.⁷ For which God saith by the prophet Jeremiah ; “The folk that me despise shall be in despite.” Honour is also called great lordship. There shall no wight serve other, but of harm and torment. Honour is also called great dignity and highness ; but in hell shall they be all fortrodden⁸ of devils. As God saith, “The horrible devils shall go and come upon the heads of damned folk ;” and this is, forasmuch as the higher that they were in this present life, the more shall they be abated⁹ and defouled in hell. Against the riches of this world shall they have misere¹⁰ of poverty, and this poverty shall be in four things : in default¹¹ of treasure ; of which David saith, “The rich folk that embraced and oned¹² all their heart to treasure of this world, shall sleep in the sleeping of death, and nothing shall they find in their hands of all their treasure.” And moreover, the misere of hell shall be in default of meat and drink. For God saith thus by Moses, “They shall be wasted with hunger, and the birds of hell shall devour them with bitter death, and the gall of the dragon shall be their drink, and the venom of the dragon their morsels.” And furthermore, their misere shall be in default of clothing, for they shall be naked in body, as of clothing, save the fire in which they burn, and other filths ; and naked shall they be in soul, of all manner virtues, which that is the clothing of the soul. Where be then the gay robes, and the soft sheets, and the fine shirts ? Lo, what saith of them the prophet Isaiah, that under them shall be strewed moths, and their covertures shall be of worms of hell. And furthermore, their misere shall be in

shadow of death ; where as is no order nor ordinance, but grisly dread that ever shall last.”

⁴ Is devoid.

⁵ Prevent, interrupt.

⁶ Trampled under foot.

¹⁰ Trouble, torment.

⁸ Everlasting.

⁷ Servant.

⁹ Abased.

¹¹ Want.

¹² United.

¹ See note 12, page 87.

² In comparison with.

³ Just before, the Parson had cited the words of Job to God (Job x. 20-22), “Suffer, Lord, that I may awhile bewail and weep, ere I go without returning to the dark land, covered with the darkness of death ; to the land of misere and of darkness, where as is the

default of friends, for he is not poor that hath good friends : but there is no friend ; for neither God nor any good creature shall be friend to them, and evereach of them shall hate other with deadly hate. The sons and the daughters shall rebel against father and mother, and kindred against kindred, and chide and despise each other, both day and night, as God saith by the prophet Micah. And the loving children, that whilom loved so fleshly each other, would each of them eat the other if they might. For how should they love together in the pains of hell, when they hated each other in the prosperity of this life? For trust well, their fleshly love was deadly hate; as saith the prophet David; "Whoso loveth wickedness, he hateth his own soul:" and whoso hateth his own soul, certes he may love none other wight in no manner: and therefore in hell is no solace nor no friendship, but ever the more kindreds that be in hell, the more cursing, the more chiding, and the more deadly hate there is among them. And furthermore, they shall have default of all manner delights; for certes delights be after the appetites of the five wits;¹ as sight, hearing, smelling, savouring,² and touching. But in hell their sight shall be full of darkness and of smoke, and their eyes full of tears; and their hearing full of waimenting³ and grinting⁴ of teeth, as saith Jesus Christ; their nostrils shall be full of stinking; and, as saith Isaiah the prophet, their savouring⁵ shall be full of bitter gall; and touching of all their body shall be covered with fire that never shall quench, and with worms that never shall die, as God saith by the mouth of Isaiah. And forasmuch as they shall not ween⁶ that they may die for pain, and by death flee from pain, that may they understand in the word of Job, that saith, "There is the shadow of death." Certes a shadow hath the likeness of the thing of which it is shadowed, but the shadow is not the same thing of which it is shadowed: right so fareth the pain of hell; it is like death, for the horrible anguish; and why? for it paineth them ever as though they should die anon; but certes they shall not die. For, as saith Saint Gregory, "To wretched caitiffs shall be given death without death, and end without end, and default without failing; for their death shall always live, and their end shall evermore begin, and their default shall never fail." And therefore saith Saint John the Evangelist, "They shall follow death, and they shall not find him, and they shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them." And eke Job saith, that in hell is no order of rule. And albeit that God hath created all things in right order, and nothing without order, but all things be ordered and numbered, yet nevertheless they that be damned be not in order, nor hold no order. For the earth shall bear them no fruit (for, as the prophet David saith, "God shall destroy the fruit of the earth, as for them"); nor water shall give them no

moisture, nor the air no refreshing, nor the fire no light. For as saith Saint Basil, "The burning of the fire of this world shall God give in hell to them that be damned, but the light and the clearness shall be given in heaven to his children; right as the good man giveth flesh to his children, and bones to his hounds." And for they shall have no hope to escape, saith Job at last, that there shall horror and grisly dread dwell without end. Horror is always dread of harm that is to come, and this dread shall ever dwell in the hearts of them that be damned. And therefore have they lost all their hope for seven causes. First⁷ for God that is their judge shall be without mercy to them; nor they may not please him; nor none of his hallows;⁸ nor they may give nothing for their ransom; nor they have no voice to speak to him; nor they may not flee from pain; nor they have no goodness in them that they may shew to deliver them from pain.

[Under the fourth head, of good works, the Parson says:—]

The courteous Lord Jesus Christ will that no good work be lost, for in somewhat it shall avail. But forasmuch as the good works that men do while they be in good life be all amortised⁷ by sin following, and also since all the good works that men do while they be in deadly sin be utterly dead, as for to have the life perdurable, well may that man that no good works doth, sing that new French song, *J'ai tout perdu—mon temps et mon labour*. For certes, sin be-reaveth a man both the goodness of nature, and eke the goodness of grace. For soothly the grace of the Holy Ghost fareth like fire, that may not be idle; for fire faileth anon as it forleteth⁸ its working, and right so grace faileth anon as it forleteth its working. Then loseth the sinful man the goodness of glory, that only is behight⁹ to good men that labour and work. Well may he be sorry then, that oweth all his life to God, as long as he hath lived, and also as long as he shall live, that no goodness hath to pay with his debt to God, to whom he oweth all his life: for trust well he shall give account, as saith Saint Bernard, of all the goods that have been given him in his present life, and how he hath them dispended, insomuch that there shall not perish an hair of his head, nor a moment of an hour shall not perish of his time, that he shall not give thereof a reckoning.

[Having treated of the causes, the Parson comes to the manner, of contrition—which should be universal and total, not merely of outward deeds of sin, but also of wicked delights and thoughts and words; "for certes Almighty God is all good, and therefore either he forgiveth all, or else right naught." Further, contrition should be "wonder sorrowful and anguishous," and also continual, with steadfast purpose of confession and amendment. Lastly, of what contrition availeth, the Parson says, that sometimes it delivereth man from sin;

¹ Senses.
² Wailing.

³ Tasting.
⁴ Gnashing, grinding.

⁵ Expect.
⁷ Killed, deadened.

⁸ Leaveth.
⁹ Promised.

that without it neither confession nor satisfaction is of any worth ; that it " destroyeth the prison of hell, and maketh weak and feeble all the strengths of the devils, and restoreth the gifts of the Holy Ghost and of all good virtues, and cleanseth the soul of sin, and delivereth it from the pain of hell, and from the company of the devil, and from the servage of sin, and restoreth it to all goods spiritual, and to the company and communion of Holy Church." He who should set his intent to these things, would no longer be inclined to sin, but would give his heart and body to the service of Jesus Christ, and thereof do him homage. " For, certes, our Lord Jesus Christ hath spared us so benignly in our follies, that if he had not pity on man's soul, a sorry song might we all sing."

The Second Part of the Parson's Tale or Treatise opens with an explanation of what is confession—which is termed " the second part of penitence, that is, sign of contrition ;" whether it ought needs be done or not ; and what things be convenable to true confession. Confession is true shewing of sins to the priest, without excusing, hiding, or forwrapping¹ of anything, and without vaunting of good works. " Also, it is necessary to understand whence that sins spring, and how they increase, and which they be." From Adam we took original sin ; " from him fleshly descended be we all, and engendered of vile and corrupt matter ;" and the penalty of Adam's transgression dwelleth with us as to temptation, which penalty is called concupiscence. " This concupiscence, when it is wrongfully disposed or ordained in a man, it maketh him covet, by covetise of flesh, fleshly sin by sight of his eyes, as to earthly things, and also covetise of highness by pride of heart." The Parson proceeds to shew how man is tempted in his flesh to sin ; how, after his natural concupiscence, comes suggestion of the devil, that is to say the devil's bellows, with which he bloweth in man the fire of concupiscence ; and how man then bethinketh him whether he will do or no the thing to which he is tempted. If he flame up into pleasure at the thought, and give way, then is he all dead in soul ; " and thus is sin accomplished, by temptation, by delight, and by consenting ; and then is the sin actual." Sin is either venial, or deadly ; deadly, when a man loves any creature more than Jesus Christ our Creator, venial, if he love Jesus Christ less than he ought. Venial sins diminish man's love to God more and more, and may in this wise skip into deadly sin ; for many small make a great. " And hearken this example : A great wave of the sea cometh sometimes with so great a violence, that it drencheth² the ship : and the same harm do sometimes the small drops of water that enter through a little crevice in the thurrok,³ and in the bottom of the ship, if men be so negligent that they discharge them not betimes. And therefore,

although there be difference betwixt these two causes of drenching, algates⁴ the ship is dreint.⁵ Right so fareth it sometimes of deadly sin," and of venial sins when they multiply in a man so greatly as to make him love worldly things more than God. The Parson then enumerates specially a number of sins which many a man peradventure deems no sins, and confesses them not, and yet nevertheless they are truly sins :—]

This is to say, at every time that a man eateth and drinketh more than sufficeth to the sustenance of his body, in certain he doth sin ; eke when he speaketh more than it needeth, he doth sin ; eke when he heareth not benignly the complaint of the poor ; eke when he is in health of body, and will not fast when other folk fast, without cause reasonable ; eke when he sleepeth more than needeth, or when he cometh by that occasion too late to church, or to other works of charity ; eke when he useth his wife without sovereign desire of engendrure, to the honour of God, or for the intent to yield his wife his debt of his body ; eke when he will not visit the sick, or the prisoner, if he may ; eke if he love wife, or child, or other worldly thing, more than reason requireth ; eke if he flatter or blandish more than he ought for any necessity ; eke if he minish or withdraw the alms of the poor ; eke if he apparail⁶ his meat more deliciously than need is, or eat it too hastily by likerousness ;⁷ eke if he talk vanities in the church, or at God's service, or that he be a talker of idle words of folly or villainy, for he shall yield account of them at the day of doom ; eke when he behighteth⁸ or assureth to do things that he may not perform ; eke when that by lightness of folly he missayeth or scorneth his neighbour ; eke when he hath any wicked suspicion of thing, that he wot of it no soothfastness : these things, and more without number, be sins, as saith Saint Augustine.

[No earthly man may eschew all venial sins ; yet may he refrain him, by the burning love that he hath to our Lord Jesus Christ, and by prayer and confession, and other good works, so that it shall but little grieve. " Furthermore, men may also refrain and put away venial sin, by receiving worthily the precious body of Jesus Christ ; by receiving eke of holy water ; by alms-deed ; by general confession of *Confiteor* at mass, and at prime, and at compline ;⁹ and by blessing of bishops and priests, and by other good works." The Parson then proceeds to weightier matters :—]

Now it is behovely¹⁰ to tell which be deadly sins, that is to say, chieftains of sins ; forasmuch as all they run in one leash, but in diverse manners. Now be they called chieftains, forasmuch as they be chief, and of them spring all other sins. The root of these sins, then, is pride, the general root of all harms. For of this root spring certain branches : as ire, envy,

¹ Disguising.
² Hold, bilge.
³ Sunk.

⁴ Causes to sink.
⁵ In any case.

⁶ Make ready.

⁷ Gluttony.

⁸ Promiseth.

⁹ Evening service of the Church.

¹⁰ Profitable, necessary.

accidie¹ or sloth, avarice or covetousness (to common understanding), gluttony, and lechery: and each of these sins hath his branches and his twigs, as shall be declared in their chapters following. And though so be, that no man can tell utterly the number of the twigs, and of the harms that come of pride, yet will I shew a part of them, as ye shall understand. There is inobedience, vaunting, hypocrisy, despite, arrogance, impudence, swelling of heart, insolence, elation, impatience, strife, contumacy, presumption, irreverence, pertinacity, vain-glory, and many another twig that I cannot tell nor declare. . . .

And yet² there is a privy species of pride, that waiteth first to be saluted ere he will salute, all³ be he less worthy than that other is; and eke he waiteth⁴ or desireth to sit or to go above him in the way, or kiss the pax,⁵ or be incensed, or go to offering before his neighbour, and such semblable⁶ things, against his duty peradventure, but that he hath his heart and his intent in such a proud desire to be magnified and honoured before the people. Now be there two manner of prides; the one of them is within the heart of a man, and the other is without. Of which soothly these foresaid things, and more than I have said, appertain to pride that is within the heart of a man; and there be other species of pride that be without: but nevertheless, the one of these species of pride is sign of the other, right as the gay levesell⁷ at the tavern is sign of the wine that is in the cellar. And this is in many things: as in speech and countenance, and outrageous array of clothing; for certes, if there had been no sin in clothing, Christ would not so soon have noted and spoken of the clothing of that rich man in the gospel. And Saint Gregory saith, that precious clothing is culpable for the dearth⁸ of it, and for its softness, and for its strangeness and disguising, and for the superfluity or for the inordinate scantness of it; alas! may not a man see in our days the sinful costly array of clothing, and namely⁹ in too much superfluity, or else in too disordinate scantness? As to the first sin, in superfluity of clothing, which that maketh it so dear, to the harm of the people, not only the cost of the embroidering, the disguising, indenting or barring, ounding, paling,¹⁰ winding, or banding, and semblable⁶ waste of cloth in vanity; but there is also the costly furring¹¹ in their gowns, so much punching of chisels to make holes, so much dagging¹² of shears, with the superfluity in length of the foresaid gowns, trailing in the dung and in the mire, on horse and eke on foot, as well of man as of woman, that all that trail-

ing is verily (as in effect) wasted, consumed, threadbare, and rotten with dung, rather than it is given to the poor, to great damage of the foresaid poor folk, and that in sundry wise: this is to say, the more that cloth is wasted, the more must it cost to the poor people for the scarceness; and furthermore, if so be that they would give such punched and dagged clothing to the poor people, it is not convenient to wear for their estate, nor sufficient to boot¹³ their necessity, to keep them from the distemperance¹⁴ of the firmament. Upon the other side, to speak of the horrible disordinate scantness of clothing, as be these cutted alops or hanselines,¹⁵ that through their shortness cover not the shameful member of man, to wicked intent; alas! some of them shew the boss and the shape of the horrible swollen members, that seem like to the malady of hernia, in the wrapping of their hosen, and eke the buttocks of them, that fare as it were the hinder part of a she-ape in the full of the moon. And moreover the wretched swollen members that they shew through disguising, in departing¹⁶ of their hosen in white and red, seemeth that half their shameful privy members were flain.¹⁷ And if so be that they depart their hosen in other colours, as is white and blue, or white and black, or black and red, and so forth; then seemeth it, by variance of colour, that the half part of their privy members be corrupt by the fire of Saint Anthony, or by canker, or other such mischance. And of the hinder part of their buttocks it is full horrible to see, for cartes, in that part of their body where they purge their stinking ordure, that foul part shew they to the people proudly in despite of honesty,¹⁸ which honesty Jesus Christ and his friends observed to shew in his life. Now as of the outrageous array of women, God wot, that though the visages of some of them seem full chaste and debonair,¹⁹ yet notify they, in their array of attire, likerousness and pride. I say not that honesty²⁰ in clothing of man or woman is unconvenable, but, certes, the superfluity or disordinate scarcity of clothing is reprobable. Also the sin of their ornament, or of apparel, as in things that appertain to riding, as in too many delicate horses, that be holden for delight, that be so fair, fat, and costly; and also in many a vicious knave,²¹ that is sustained because of them; in curious harnes, as in saddles, cruppers, peytrels,²² and bridles, covered with precious cloth and rich bars and plates of gold and silver. For which God saith by Zephariah the prophet, "I will confound the riders of such horses." These folk take little regard of the riding of God's Son of heaven, and of

¹ Neglectfulness or indifference; from the Greek, ἀκηδεια.

² Moreover.

³ Although.

⁴ Expecteth.

⁵ An image which was presented to the people to be kissed, at that part of the mass where the priest said, "Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum." The ceremony took the place, for greater convenience, of the "kiss of peace," which clergy and people, at this passage, used to bestow upon each other.

⁷ Arbour; bush.

⁶ Like.

⁸ Dearness.

⁹ Especially.

¹⁰ Three ways of ornamenting clothes with lace, in barring it was laid on crossways, in ounding it waved, in paling it was laid on lengthways.

¹¹ Lining or edging with fur.

¹² Help, remedy.

¹³ Breeches.

¹⁴ Played.

¹⁵ Gentle.

¹⁶ Servant.

¹⁷ Slitting, slashing.

¹⁸ Inclemency.

¹⁹ Dividing.

²⁰ Decency.

²¹ Reasonable and appropriate st.

²² Breast-plates.

harness, when he rode upon an ass, and had no other harness but the poor clothes of his disciples; nor we read not that ever he rode on any other beast. I speak this for the sin of superfluity, and not for reasonable honesty,¹ when reason it requireth. And moreover, certes, pride is greatly notified in holding of great meinie,² when they be of little profit or of right no profit, and namely³ when that meinie is felonous and damageous⁴ to the people by hardiness⁵ of high lordship, or by way of office; for certes, such lords sell then their lordship to the devil of hell, when they sustain the wickedness of their meinie. Or else, when these folk of low degree, as they that hold hostleries, sustain theft of their hostellers, and that is in many manner of deceits: that manner of folk be the flies that follow the honey, or else the hounds that follow the carrion. Such foresaid folk strangle spiritually their lordships; for which thus saith David the prophet, "Wicked death may come unto these lordships, and God give that they may descend into hell adown; for in their houses is iniquity and shrewedness,⁶ and not God of heaven." And certes, but if⁷ they do amendment, right as God gave his benison to Laban by the service of Jacob, and to Pharaoh by the service of Joseph; right so God will give his malison to such lordships as sustain the wickedness of their servants, but⁸ they come to amendment. Pride of the table apaireth⁹ eke full oft; for, certes, rich men be called to feasts, and poor folk be put away and rebuked; also in excess of divers meats and drinks, and namely³ such manner bake-meats and dish-meats burning of wild fire, and painted and castled with paper, and semblable⁹ waste, so that it is abuse to think. And eke in too great preciousness of vessel,¹⁰ and curiosity of minstrelsy, by which a man is stirred more to the delights of luxury, if so be that he set his heart the less upon our Lord Jesus Christ, certain it is a sin; and certainly the delights might be so great in this case, that a man might lightly¹¹ fall by them into deadly sin.

[The sins that arise of pride advisedly and habitually are deadly; those that arise by frailty unadvised suddenly, and suddenly withdraw again, though grievous, are not deadly. Pride itself springs sometimes of the goods of nature, sometimes of the goods of fortune, sometimes of the goods of grace; but the Parson, enumerating and examining all these in turn, points out how little security they possess and how little ground for pride they furnish, and goes on to enforce the remedy against pride—which is humility or meekness, a virtue through which a man hath true knowledge of himself, and holdeth no high esteem of himself in regard of his deserts, considering ever his frailty.]

Now be there three manners¹² of humility; as humility in heart, and another in the mouth, and the third in works. The humility in the

heart is in four manners: the one is, when a man holdeth himself as nought worth before God of heaven; the second is, when he despiseth no other man; the third is, when he recketh not though men hold him nought worth; the fourth is, when he is not sorry of his humiliation. Also the humility of mouth is in four things: in temperate speech; in humility of speech; and when he confesseth with his own mouth that he is such as he thinketh that he is in his heart; another is, when he praiseth the bounté¹³ of another man and nothing thereof diminisheth. Humility eke in works is in four manners: the first is, when he putteth other men before him; the second is, to choose the lowest place of all; the third is, gladly to assent to good counsel; the fourth is, to stand gladly by the award¹⁴ of his sovereign, or of him that is higher in degree: certain this is a great work of humility.

[The Parson proceeds to treat of the other cardinal sins, and their remedies: (2.) Envy, with its remedy, the love of God principally and of our neighbours as ourselves: (3.) Anger, with all its fruits in revenge, rancour, hate, discord, manslaughter, blasphemy, swearing, falsehood, flattery, chiding and reproving, scorning, treachery, sowing of strife, doubleness of tongue, betraying of counsel to a man's disgrace, menacing, idle words, jangling, japery or buffoonery, &c.—and its remedy in the virtues called mansuetude, debonairté, or gentleness, and patience or sufferance: (4.) Sloth, or "Accidie," which comes after the sin of Anger, because Envy blinds the eyes of a man, and Anger troubleth a man, and Sloth maketh him heavy, thoughtful, and peevish. It is opposed to every estate of man—as unfallen, and held to work in praising and adoring God; as sinful, and held to labour in praying for deliverance from sin; and as in the state of grace, and held to works of penitence. It resembles the heavy and sluggish condition of those in hell; it will suffer no hardness and no penance; it prevents any beginning of good works; it causes despair of God's mercy, which is the sin against the Holy Ghost; it induces somnolency and neglect of communion in prayer with God; and it breeds negligence or recklessness, that cares for nothing, and is the nurse of all mischiefs, if ignorance is their mother. Against Sloth, and these and other branches and fruits of it, the remedy lies in the virtue of fortitude or strength, in its various species of magnanimity or great courage; faith and hope in God and his saints; surety or sickness, when a man fears nothing that can oppose the good works he has undertaken; magnificence, when he carries out great works of goodness begun; constancy or stability of heart; and other incentives to energy and laborious service: (5.) Avarice, or Covetousness, which is the root of all harms, since its votaries are idolaters, oppressors and enslavers

¹ Seemliness.
² Especially.
³ Arrogance.

⁴ Retinue of servants.
⁵ Violent and harmful.
⁶ Impiety.

⁷ Unless.
⁸ Like.
¹² Kinds.

⁹ Worketh harm.
¹⁰ Plate.
¹³ Goodness.

¹¹ Easily.
¹⁴ Judgment.

of men, deceivers of their equals in business, simoniacs, gamblers, liars, thieves, false swearers, blasphemers, murderers, and sacrilegious. Its remedy lies in compassion and pity largely exercised, and in reasonable liberality—for those who spend on “fool-largesse,” or ostentation of worldly estate and luxury, shall receive the malison that Christ shall give at the day of doom to them that shall be damned: (6.) Gluttony;—of which the Parson treats so briefly that the chapter may be given in full:—]

After Avarice cometh Gluttony, which is express against the commandment of God. Gluttony is unmeasurable appetite to eat or to drink; or else to do in aught to the unmeasurable appetite and disordered covetousness¹ to eat or drink. This sin corrupted all this world, as is well shewed in the sin of Adam and of Eve. Look also what saith Saint Paul of gluttony: “Many,” saith he, “go, of which I have oft said to you, and now I say it weeping, that they be enemies of the cross of Christ, of which the end is death, and of which their womb is their God and their glory;” in confusion of them that so savour² earthly things. He that is usant³ to this sin of gluttony, he may no sin withstand, he must be in servage⁴ of all vices, for it is the devil’s hoard,⁵ where he hideth him in and resteth. This sin hath many species. The first is drunkenness, that is the horrible sepulture of man’s reason: and therefore when a man is drunken, he hath lost his reason; and this is deadly sin. But soothly, when that a man is not wont to strong drink, and peradventure knoweth not the strength of the drink, or hath feebleness in his head, or hath travailed,⁶ through which he drinketh the more, all⁷ be, he suddenly caught with drink, it is no deadly sin, but venial. The second species of gluttony is, that the spirit of a man waxeth all troubled for drunkenness, and bereaveth a man the discretion of his wit. The third species of gluttony is, when a man devoureth his meat, and hath no rightful manner of eating. The fourth is, when, through the great abundance of his meat, the humours of his body be distempered. The fifth is, forgetfulness by too much drinking, for which a man sometimes forgetteth by the morrow what he did at eve. In other manner be distinct the species of gluttony, after Saint Gregory. The first is, for to eat or drink before time. The second is, when a man getteth him too delicate meat or drink. The third is, when men take too much over measure.⁸ The fourth is, curiosity⁹ with great intent¹⁰ to make and apparel¹¹ his meat. The fifth is, for to eat too greedily. These be the five fingers of the devil’s hand, by which he draweth folk to the sin.

Against gluttony the remedy is abstinence, as saith Galen; but that I hold not meritori-

ous, if he do it only for the health of his body. Saint Augustine will that abstinence be done for virtue, and with patience. Abstinence, saith he, is little worth, but¹² if a man have good will thereto, and but it be enforced by patience and by charity, and that men do it for God’s sake, and in hope to have the bliss in heaven. The fellows of abstinence be temperance, that holdeth the mean in all things; also shame, that escheweth all dishonesty;¹³ sufficiency, that seeketh no rich meats nor drinks, nor doth no force of¹⁴ no outrageous apparelling of meat; measure¹⁵ also, that restraineth by reason the unmeasurable appetite of eating; soberness also, that restraineth the outrage of drink; sparing also, that restraineth the delicate ease to sit long at meat, wherefore some folk stand of their own will to eat, because they will eat at less leisure.

[At great length the Parson then points out the many varieties of the sin of (7.) Lechery, and its remedy in chastity and continence, alike in marriage and in widowhood; also in the abstaining from all such indulgences of eating, drinking, and sleeping as inflame the passions, and from the company of all who may tempt to the sin. Minute guidance is given as to the duty of confessing fully and faithfully the circumstances that attend and may aggravate this sin; and the Treatise then passes to the consideration of the conditions that are essential to a true and profitable confession of sin in general. First, it must be in sorrowful bitterness of spirit; a condition that has five signs—shamefastness, humility in heart and outward sign, weeping with the bodily eyes or in the heart, disregard of the shame that might curtail or garble confession, and obedience to the penance enjoined. Secondly, true confession must be promptly made, for dread of death, of increase of sinfulness, of forgetfulness of what should be confessed, of Christ’s refusal to hear if it be put off to the last day of life; and this condition has four terms; that confession be well pondered beforehand, that the man confessing have comprehended in his mind the number and greatness of his sins and how long he has lain in sin, that he be contrite for and eschew his sins, and that he fear and flee the occasions for that sin to which he is inclined.—What follows under this head is of some interest for the light which it throws on the rigorous government wielded by the Romish Church in those days:—]

Also thou shalt shrive thee of all thy sins to one man, and not a parcel¹⁶ to one man, and a parcel to another; that is to understand, in intent to depart¹⁷ thy confession for shame or dread; for it is but strangling of thy soul. For certes Jesus Christ is entirely all good, in him is none imperfection, and therefore either he forgiveth all perfectly, or else never

¹ Craving.

² Accustomed, addicted.

³ Lair, lurking-place.

⁷ Although.

² Take delight in.

⁴ Bondage.

⁶ Laboured.

⁸ Immoderately.

⁹ Nicety.

¹¹ Prepare.

¹³ Indecency, impropriety.

¹⁵ Moderation.

¹⁰ Application, pains.

¹² Unless.

¹⁴ Sets no value on.

¹⁷ Divide.

a deal.¹ I say not that if thou be assigned to thy penitencer² for a certain sin, that thou art bound to shew him all the remnant of thy sins, of which thou hast been shriven of thy curate, but if it like thee³ of thy humility; this is no departing⁴ of shrift. And I say not, where I speak of division of confession, that if thou have license to shrive thee to a discreet and an honest priest, and where thee liketh, and by the license of thy curate, that thou mayest not well shrive thee to him of all thy sins: but let no blot be behind, let no sin be untold as far as thou hast remembrance. And when thou shalt be shriven of thy curate, tell him eke all the sins that thou hast done since thou wert last shriven. This is no wicked intent of division of shrift. Also, very shrift⁵ asketh certain conditions. First, that thou shrive thee by thy free will, not constrained, nor for shame of folk, nor for malady,⁶ or such things: for it is reason, that he that trespasseth by his free will, that by his free will he confess his trespass; and that no other man tell his sin but himself; nor he shall not nay nor deny his sin, nor wrath him against the priest for admonishing him to leave his sin. The second condition is, that thy shrift be lawful, that is to say, that thou that shrivest thee, and eke the priest that heareth thy confession, be verily in the faith of Holy Church, and that a man be not despaired of the mercy of Jesus Christ, as Cain and Judas were. And eke a man must accuse himself of his own trespass, and not another: but he shall blame and wite⁷ himself of his own malice and of his sin, and none other: but nevertheless, if that another man be occasion or else enticer of his sin, or the estate of the person be such by which his sin is aggravated, or else that he may not plainly shrive him but⁸ he tell the person with which he hath sinned, then may he tell, so that his intent be not to backbite the person, but only to declare his confession. Thou shalt not eke make no leasings⁹ in thy confession for humility, peradventure, to say that thou hast committed and done such sins of which that thou wert never guilty. For Saint Augustine saith, "If that thou, because of humility, makest a leasing on thyself, though thou were not in sin before, yet art thou then in sin through thy leasing." Thou must also shew thy sin by thine own proper mouth, but⁸ thou be dumb, and not by letter; for thou that hast done the sin, thou shalt have the shame of the confession. Thou shalt not paint thy confession with fair and subtle words, to cover the more thy sin; for then beguilest thou thyself, and not the priest; thou must tell it plainly, be it never so foul nor so horrible. Thou shalt eke shrive thee to a priest that is discreet to counsel thee; and eke thou shalt not shrive

thee for vain-glory, nor for hypocrisy, nor for no cause but only for the doubt¹⁰ of Jesus Christ and the health of thy soul. Thou shalt not run to the priest all suddenly, to tell him lightly thy sin, as who telleth a jape¹¹ or a tale, but advisedly and with good devotion; and generally shrive thee oft; if thou oft fall, oft arise by confession. And though thou shrive thee oftener than once of sin of which thou hast been shriven, it is more merit; and, as saith Saint Augustine, thou shalt have the more lightly¹² release and grace of God, both of sin and of pain. And certes, once a year at the least way, it is lawful to be houseled,¹³ for soothly once a year all things in the earth renewen.¹⁴

[Here ends the Second Part of the Treatise; the Third Part, which contains the practical application of the whole, follows entire, along with the remarkable "Prayer of Chaucer," as it stands in the Harleian Manuscript:—]

De Tertiâ Parte Penitentiae.

Now have I told you of very¹⁵ confession, that is the second part of penitence: The third part of penitence is satisfaction, and that standeth generally in almsdeed and bodily pain. Now be there three manner of almsdeed: contrition of heart, where a man offereth himself to God; the second is, to have pity of the default of his neighbour; the third is, in giving of good counsel and comfort, ghostly and bodily, where men have need, and namely¹⁶ in sustenance of man's food. And take keep¹⁷ that a man hath need of these things generally; he hath need of food, of clothing, and of herberow,¹⁸ he hath need of charitable counsel and visiting in prison and malady, and sepulture of his dead body. And if thou mayest not visit the needful with thy person, visit them by thy message and by thy gifts. These be generally alms or works of charity of them that have temporal riches or discretion in counselling. Of these works shalt thou hear at the day of doom. This alms shouldest thou do of thine own proper things, and hastily,¹⁹ and privily if thou mayest; but nevertheless, if thou mayest not do it privily, thou shalt not forbear to do alms, though men see it, so that it be not done for thank of the world, but only for thank of Jesus Christ. For, as witnesseth Saint Matthew, chap. v., "A city may not be hid that is set on a mountain, nor men light not a lantern and put it under a bushel, but men set it on a candlestick, to light the men in the house; right so shall your light lighten before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father that is in heaven."

Now as to speak of bodily pain, it is in prayer, in wakings,²⁰ in fastings, and in virtuous teachings. Of orisons ye shall understand, that ori-

¹ Not at all.

² A priest who enjoined penance in extraordinary cases.

⁴ Division.

⁶ Sickness.

⁸ Unless.

¹⁰ Fear.

³ Unless thou be pleased.

⁵ True confession.

⁷ Accuse.

⁹ Falsehoods.

¹¹ Jest.

¹² Easily.

¹³ To receive the holy sacrament; from Anglo-Saxon, "husel;" Latin, "hostia," or "hostiola," the host.

¹⁴ Renew themselves.

¹⁶ Especially.

¹⁸ Lodging.

²⁰ Watchings.

¹⁵ True.

¹⁷ Notice.

¹⁹ Promptly.

sons or prayers is to say a piteous will of heart, that redresseth it in God, and expresseth it by word outward, to remove harms, and to have things spiritual and durable, and sometimes temporal things. Of which orisons, certes in the orison of the *Pater noster* hath our Lord Jesus Christ enclosed most things. Certes, it is privileged of three things in its dignity, for which it is more digne¹ than any other prayer: for Jesus Christ himself made it: and it is short, for² it should be coude the more lightly,³ and to withhold⁴ it the more easy in heart, and help himself the oftener with this orison; and for a man should be the less weary to say it; and for a man may not excuse him to learn it, it is so short and so easy: and for it comprehendeth in itself all good prayers. The exposition of this holy prayer, that is so excellent and so digne, I betake⁵ to these masters of theology; save thus much will I say, when thou prayest that God should forgive thee thy guilts, as thou forgivest them that they guilt to thee, be full well ware that thou be not out of charity. This holy orison aminisheth⁶ eke venial sin, and therefore it appertaineth specially to penitence. This prayer must be truly said, and in very faith, and that men pray to God ordinally, discreetly, and devoutly; and always a man shall put his will to be subject to the will of God. This orison must eke be said with great humbleness and full pure, and honestly, and not to the annoyance of any man or woman. It must eke be continued with the works of charity. It availeth against the vices of the soul; for, assaith Saint Jerome, by fasting he saved the vices of the flesh, and by prayer the vices of the soul.

After this thou shalt understand, that bodily pain stands in waking.⁷ For Jesus Christ saith, "Wake and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Ye shall understand also, that fasting stands in three things: in forbearing of bodily meat and drink, and in forbearing of worldly jollity, and in forbearing of deadly sin; this is to say, that a man shall keep him from deadly sin in all that he may. And thou shalt understand eke, that God ordained fasting, and to fasting appertain four things: largeness⁸ to poor folk; gladness of heart spiritual; not to be angry nor annoyed nor grudge⁹ for he fasteth; and also reasonable hour for to eat by measure, that is to say, a man should not eat in untime,¹⁰ nor sit the longer at his meal, for¹¹ he fasteth. Then shalt thou understand, that bodily pain standeth in discipline, or teaching, by word, or by writing, or by ensample. Also in wearing of hairs¹² or of stamin,¹³ or of habergeons¹⁴ on their naked flesh for Christ's sake; but ware thee well that such manner penance

of thy flesh make not thine heart bitter or angry, nor annoyed of thyself; for better is to cast away thine hair than to cast away the sweetness of our Lord Jesus Christ. And therefore saith Saint Paul, "Clothe you, as they that be chosen of God in heart, of misericorde,¹⁵ debonairté,¹⁶ sufferance,¹⁷ and such manner of clothing," of which Jesus Christ is more apaid¹⁸ than of hairs or of hauberks. Then is discipline eke in knocking of thy breast, in scourging with yards,¹⁹ in kneelings, in tribulations, in suffering patiently wrongs that be done to him, and eke in patient sufferance of maladies, or losing of worldly catel,²⁰ or of wife, or of child, or of other friends.

Then shalt thou understand which things disturb penance, and this is in four things; that is dread, shame, hope, and wanhope, that is, desperation. And for to speak first of dread, for which he weeneth that he may suffer no penance, thereagainst is remedy for to think that bodily penance is but short and little at the regard of²¹ the pain of hell, that is so cruel and so long, that it lasteth without end. Now against the shame that a man hath to shrive him, and namely²² these hypocrites, that would be holden so perfect, that they have no need to shrive them; against that shame should a man think, that by way of reason he that hath not been ashamed to do foul things, certes he ought not to be ashamed to do fair things, and that is confession. A man should eke think, that God seeth and knoweth all thy thoughts, and all thy works; to him may nothing be hid nor covered. Men should eke remember them of the shame that is to come at the day of doom, to them that be not penitent and shriven in this present life; for all the creatures in heaven, and in earth, and in hell, shall see apertly²³ all that he hideth in this world.

Now for to speak of them that be so negligent and slow to shrive them; that stands in two manners. The one is, that he hopeth to live long, and to purchase²⁴ much riches for his delight, and then he will shrive him: and, as he sayeth, he may, as him seemeth, timely enough come to shrift: another is, the surquedrie²⁵ that he hath in Christ's mercy. Against the first vice, he shall think that our life is in no sickness,²⁶ and eke that all the riches in this world be in adventure, and pass as a shadow on the wall; and, as saith St Gregory, that it appertaineth to the great righteousness of God, that never shall the pain stint²⁷ of them, that never would withdraw them from sin, their thanks,²⁸ but aye continue in sin; for that perpetual will to do sin shall they have perpetual pain. Wanhope²⁹ is in two mannara.³⁰

1 Worthy.
3 The more easily conned or learned.
4 Retain.
6 Lesseneth.
8 Liberality.
10 Out of time.
12 Haircloth.
14 It was a frequent penance among the chivalric orders to wear mail shirts next the skin.

2 In order that.
5 Commit.
7 Watching.
9 Murmur.
11 Because.
13 Coarse hempen cloth.

15 With compassion.
17 Patience.
19 Rods.
21 In comparison with.
23 Openly.
25 Presumption; from 'old French, "surcuidier," to think arrogantly, be full of conceit.
27 Cease.
29 Despair.

16 Gentleness.
18 Better pleased.
20 Chattels.
22 Especially.
24 Acquire.
26 Security.
28 With their goodwill.
30 Of two kinds.

The first wanhope is, in the mercy of God : the other is, that they think they might not long persevere in goodness. The first wanhope cometh of that he deemeth that he sinned so highly and so oft, and so long hath lain in sin, that he shall not be saved. Certes against that cursed wanhope should he think, that the passion of Jesus Christ is more strong for to unbind, than sin is strong for to bind. Against the second wanhope he shall think, that as oft as he falleth, he may arise again by penitence ; and though he never so long hath lain in sin, the mercy of Christ is always ready to receive him to mercy. Against the wanhope that he thinketh he should not long persevere in goodness, he shall think that the feebleness of the devil may nothing do, but¹ men will suffer him ; and eke he shall have strength of the help of God, and of all Holy Church, and of the protection of angels, if him list.

Then shall men understand, what is the fruit of penance ; and after the word of Jesus Christ, it is the endless bliss of heaven, where joy hath no contrariety of woe nor of penance nor grievance ; there all harms be passed of this present life ; there as is the sickness from the pain of hell ; there as is the blissful company, that rejoice them evermore each of the other's joy ; there as the body of man, that whilom was foul and dark, is more clear than the sun ; there as the body of man that whilom was sick and frail, feeble and mortal, is immortal, and so strong and so whole, that there may nothing apair² it ; there is neither hunger, nor thirst, nor cold, but every soul replenished with the sight of the perfect knowing of God. This blissful regne³ may men purchase by poverty spiritual, and the glory by lowliness, the plenty of joy by hunger and thirst, the rest by travail, and the life by death and mortification of sin ; to which life He us bring, that bought us with his precious blood ! Amen.

¹ Unless.

² Impair, injure.

³ Kingdom.

⁴ The genuineness and real significance of this "Prayer of Chaucer," usually called his "Retraction," have been warmly disputed. On the one hand, it has been declared that the monks forged the retraction, and procured its insertion among the works of the man who had done so much to expose their abuses and ignorance, and to weaken their hold on popular credulity ; on the other hand, Chaucer himself, at the close of his life, is said to have greatly lamented the "ribaldry" and the attacks on the clergy which marked especially "The Canterbury Tales," and to have drawn up a formal retraction, of which the "Prayer" is either a copy or an abridgment. The beginning and end of the "Prayer," as Tyrwhitt points

*Preces de Chauceres.*⁴

Now pray I to you all that hear this little treatise or read it, that if there be anything in it that likes them, that thereof they thank our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom proceedeth all wit and all goodness ; and if there be anything that displeaseth them, I pray them also that they arette⁵ it to the default of mine unconning,⁶ and not to my will, that would fain have said better if I had had conning ; for the book saith, all that is written for our doctrine is written. Wherefore I beseech you meekly for the mercy of God that ye pray for me, that God have mercy on me and forgive me my guilts, and namely⁷ my translations and of inditing in worldly vanities, which I revoke in my Retractions, as is the Book of Troilus, the Book also of Fame, the Book of Twenty-five Ladies, the Book of the Duchess, the Book of Saint Valentine's Day and of the Parliament of Birds, the Tales of Canterbury, all those that sounen unto sin,⁸ the Book of the Lion, and many other books, if they were in my mind or remembrance, and many a song and many a lecherous lay, of the which Christ for his great mercy forgive me the sins. But of the translation of Boece de Consolacione, and other books of consolation and of legend of lives of saints, and homilies, and moralities, and devotion, that thank I our Lord Jesus Christ, and his mother, and all the saints in heaven, beseeching them that they from henceforth unto my life's end send me grace to bewail my guilts, and to study to the salvation of my soul, and grant me grace and space of very⁹ repentance, penitence, confession, and satisfaction, to do in this present life, through the benign grace of Him that is King of kings and Priest of all priests, that bought us with his precious blood of his heart, so that I may be one of them at the day of doom that shall be saved : Qui cum Patre et Spiritu Sancto vivis et regnas Deus per omnia secula. Amen.

out, are in tone and terms quite appropriate in the mouth of the Parson, while they carry on the subject of which he has been treating ; and, despite the fact that Mr Wright holds the contrary opinion, Tyrwhitt seems to be justified in setting down the "Retraction" as interpolated into the close of the Parson's Tale. Of the circumstances under which the interpolation was made, or the causes by which it was dictated, little or nothing can now be confidently affirmed ; but the agreement of the manuscripts and the early editions in giving it, render it impossible to discard it peremptorily as a declaration of prudish or of interested regret, with which Chaucer himself had nothing whatever to do

⁵ Impute.

⁶ Unskilfulness.

⁷ Especially.

⁸ Are sinful, tend towards sin, ⁹ True.

THE COURT OF LOVE.

[“THE COURT OF LOVE” was probably Chaucer’s first poem of any consequence. It is believed to have been written at the age, and under the circumstances, of which it contains express mention; that is, when the poet was eighteen years old, and resided as a student at Cambridge,—about the year 1346. The composition is marked by an elegance, care, and finish very different from the bold freedom which in so great measure distinguishes the *Canterbury Tales*; and the fact is easily explained when we remember that, in the earlier poem, Chaucer followed a beaten path, in which he had many predecessors and competitors, all seeking to sound the praises of love with the grace, the ingenuity, and studious devotion, appropriate to the theme. The story of the poem is exceedingly simple. Under the name of Philogenet, a clerk or scholar of Cambridge, the poet relates that, summoned by Mercury to the Court of Love, he journeys to the splendid castle where the King and Queen of Love, Admetus and Alcestis, keep their state. Discovering among the courtiers a friend named Philobone, a chamberwoman to the Queen, Philogenet is led by her into a circular temple, where, in a tabernacle, sits Venus, with Cupid by her side. While he is surveying the motley crowd of suitors to the goddess, Philogenet is summoned back into the King’s presence, chidden for his tardiness in coming to Court, and commanded to swear observance to the twenty Statutes of Love—which are recited at length. Philogenet then makes his prayers and vows to Venus, desiring that he may have for his love a lady whom he has seen in a dream; and Philobone introduces him to the lady herself, named Rosial, to whom he does suit and service of love. At first the lady is obdurate to his entreaties; but, Philogenet having proved the sincerity of his passion by a fainting fit, Rosial relents, promises her favour, and orders Philobone to conduct him round the Court. The courtiers are then minutely described; but the description is broken off abruptly, and we are introduced to Rosial in the midst of a confession of her love. Finally she commands Philogenet to abide with her until the First of May, when the King of Love will hold high festival; he obeys; and the poem closes with the May Day festival service, celebrated by a choir of birds, who sing an ingenious, but what must have seemed in those days a more than slightly profane, paraphrase or parody of the matins for Trinity Sunday, to the praise of Cupid. From this outline, it will be seen at once that Chaucer’s “Court of Love” is in important particulars different from the institutions which, in the two centuries preceding his own, had so much occupied the attention of poets and gallants, and so powerfully controlled the social life of the noble and refined classes. It is a regal, not a legal, Court which the poet pictures to us; we are not introduced to a regularly constituted and authoritative tribunal in which nice questions of conduct in the relations of lovers are discussed and decided—but to the central and sovereign seat of Love’s authority, where the statutes are moulded, and the decrees are issued, upon which the inferior and special tribunals we have mentioned frame their proceedings. The “Courts of Love,” in Chaucer’s time, had lost none of the prestige and influence which had been conferred upon them by the patronage and participation of Kings, Queens, Emperors, and Popes. But the institution, in its legal or judicial character, was peculiar to France; and although the whole spirit of Chaucer’s poem, especially as regards the esteem and reverence in which women were held, is that which animated the French Courts, his treatment of the subject is broader and more general, consequently more fitted to enlist the interest of English readers. The poem consists of 206 stanzas of seven lines each; of which, in this edition, eighty-three are represented by a prose abridgement.]

WITH timorous heart, and trembling hand of
dread,

Of cunning¹ naked, bare of eloquence,
Unto the flow'r of port in womanhead²
I write, as he that none intelligence
Of metres hath,³ nor flowers of sentence,
Save that me list my writing to convey,
In that I can, to please her high nobley.⁴

The blossoms fresh of Tullius'⁵ garden swoot⁶
Present they not, my matter for to born:⁷
Poems of Virgil takē here no root,
Nor craft of Galfrid⁸ may not here sojourn;
Why n' am⁹ I cunning? O well may I mourn,
For lack of science, that I cannot write
Unto the princess of my life aright!

No terms are dign¹⁰ unto her excellence,
So is she sprung of noble stirp¹¹ and high;
A world of honour and of reverence
There is in her, this will I testify.
Calliopé, thou sister wise and aly,¹²
And thou, Minerva, guide me with thy grace,
That language rude my matter not deface!

Thy sugar droppēs sweet of Helicon
Distil in me, thou gentle Muse, I pray;
And thee, Melpomené,¹³ I call anon
Of ignorance the mist to chase away;
And give me grace so for to write and say,
That she, my lady, of her worthiness,
Accept in gree¹⁴ this little short treatēss,¹⁵

That is entitled thus, *The Court of Love*.
And ye that be metricians,¹⁶ me excuse,
I you beseech, for Venus' sake above;
For what I mean in this ye need not muse:
And if so be my lady it refuse
For lack of ornate speech, I would be woe
That I presume to her to writē so.

But my intent, and all my busy cure,¹⁷
Is for to write this treatise, as I can,
Unto my lady, stable, true, and sure,
Faithful and kind, since first that she began
Me to accept in service as her man;¹⁸
To her be all the pleasure of this book,
That, when her like,¹⁹ she may it read and look.

¹ Skill.

² One who is the perfection of womanly behaviour.

³ So the Man of Law, in the prologue to his Tale (page 60), is made to say that Chaucer "can but lewedly (ignorantly or imperfectly) on metres and on rhyming craftily." But the humility of those apologies is not justified by the care and finish of his earlier poems.

⁴ Nobleness.

⁵ Cicero's.

⁶ Sweet.

⁷ Burnish: the poet means, that his verses do not display the eloquence or brilliancy of Cicero in setting forth his subject-matter.

⁸ Geoffrey de Vinsauf, to whose treatise on poetical composition a less flattering allusion is made in *The Nun's Priest's Tale*. See note 12, page 170.

⁹ Am not.

¹⁰ Worthy.

¹¹ Race, stock; Latin, "stirps."

¹² Skilful. Calliope is the Epic Muse—"sister" to the other eight.

¹³ The Tragic Muse.

¹⁴ With favour.

¹⁵ Treatise.

¹⁶ Skilled in versifying.

¹⁷ Care.

¹⁸ Liegeman, servant.

¹⁹ When it so pleases her.

²⁰ Gradually attaining.

²¹ The same is said of Griselda, in *The Clerk's Tale*; though she was of tender years, "yet in the breast of her virginity there was inclos'd a sad and ripe corāge" (page 95).

²² Little.

²³ The confusion which Chaucer makes between

When [he] was young, at eighteen year of age,
Lusty and light, desirous of pleasānce,
Approaching on²⁰ full sad and ripe corāge,²¹

Then—says the poet—did Love urge him to do
him obeisance, and to go "the Court of Love to
see, a lite²² beside the Mount of Citharee."²³
Mercury bade him, on pain of death, to appear;
and he went by strange and far countries in
search of the Court. Seeing at last a crowd of
people, "as bees," making their way thither,
the poet asked whither they went; and "one
that answer'd like a maid" said that they were
bound to the Court of Love, at Citheron,²⁴ where
"the King of Love, and all his noble rout,²⁵

"Dwelleth within a castle royally."
So them apace I journey'd forth among,
And as he said, so found I there truly;
For I beheld the towers high and strong,
And high pinnacles, large of height and long,
With plate of gold bespread on ev'ry side,
And precious stones, the stone work for to hide.

No sapphire of Ind, no ruby rich of price,
There lacked then, nor emerald so green,
Balais,²⁶ Turkeis,²⁶ nor thing, to my devise,²⁷
That may the castle makē for to sheen;²⁸
All was as bright as stars in winter be'n;²⁹
And Phoebus shone, to make his peace again,
For trespass³⁰ done to high estatēs twain,—

When he had found Venus in the arms of Mars,
and hastened to tell Vulcan of his wife's infi-
delity.³¹ Now he was shining brightly on the
castle, "in sign he looked after Lovē's grace;"
for there is no god in Heaven or in Hell "but
he hath been right subject unto Love." Con-
tinuing his description of the castle, Philogenet
says that he saw never any so large and high;
within and without, it was painted "with many
a thousand daisies, red as rose," and white also,
in signification of whom, he knew not; unless it
was the flower of Alcestis,³² who, under Venus,
was queen of the place, as Admetus was king;

To whom obey'd the ladies good nineteen,³³
With many a thousand other, bright of face.

Citharon and Cythera, has already been remarked.
See note 2, page 86.

²⁴ Company.

²⁵ Bastard rubies; said to be so called from Balassa, the Asian country where they were found.

²⁶ Turquoise stones.

²⁷ So far as I can tell; to my judgment.

²⁸ Shine, be beautiful.

²⁹ Arc.

³⁰ Offence.

³¹ Spenser, in his description of the House of Busirane, speaks of the sad distress into which Phoebus was plunged by Cupid, in revenge for the betrayal of "his mother's wantonness, when she with Mars was meint in joyfulness" (page 439).

³² Alcestis, daughter of Pelias, was won to wife by Admetus, King of Phææ, who complied with her father's demand that he should come to claim her in a chariot drawn by lions and boars. By the aid of Apollo—who tended the flocks of Admetus during his banishment from heaven—the suitor fulfilled the condition; and Apollo further induced the Moiræ or Fates to grant that Admetus should never die, if his father, mother, or wife would die for him. Alcestis devoted herself in his stead; and, since each had made great efforts or sacrifices for love, the pair are fitly placed as king and queen in the Court of Love.

³³ In the prologue to the "Legend of Good Women," Chaucer says that behind the God of Love, upon the

And young men fele¹ came forth with lusty pace,
And aged eke, their homage to dispose;
But what they were, I could not well disclose.

Yet nere and nere² forth in I gan me dress,
Into a hall of noble apparail,³
With arras⁴ spread, and cloth of gold, I guess,
And other silk of easier avail;⁵
Under the cloth of their estate,⁶ sans fail,
The King and Queen there sat, as I beheld;
It passed joy of Elysée the feld.⁷

There saintes⁸ have their coming and resort,
To see the King so royally beseen,⁹
In purple clad, and eke the Queen in sort;¹⁰
And on their heades saw I crownes twain,
With stonēs frett,¹¹ so that it was no pain,
Withoutē meat or drink, to stand and see
The Kingē's honour and the royalty.

To treat of state affairs, Danger¹² stood by the
King, and Disdain by the Queen; who cast her
eyes haughtily about, sending forth beams that
seemed "shapen like a dart, sharp and piercing,
and small and straight of line;" while her hair
shone as gold so fine, "dishevel, crisp, down
hanging at her back a yard in length."¹³ Amazed
and dazzled by her beauty, Philogenet stood
perplexed, till he spied a friend, Philobone—a
chamberwoman of the Queen's—who asked how
and on what errand he came thither. Learning
that he had been summoned by Mercury, she
told him that he ought to have come of his free
will, and that he "will be shent"¹⁴ because he
did not.

"For ye that reign in youth and lustiness,
Pamper'd with ease, and jealous in your age,
Your duty is, as far as I can guess,
To Lovē's Court to dressē¹⁵ your voyage,
As soon as Nature maketh you so sage
That ye may know a woman from a swan,¹⁶
Or when your foot is grown half a span.

"But since that ye, by wilful negligence,
This eighteen year have kept yourself at large,
The greater is your trespass and offence,
And in your neck you must bear all the charge:
For better were ye be withoutē barge¹⁷

green, he "saw coming in ladies nineteen;" but the
stories of only nine good women are there told. In
the prologue to *The Man of Law's Tale*, sixteen ladies
are named as having their stories written in the
"*Saints' Legend of Cupid*"—now known as the
"*Legend of Good Women*"—(see note 1, page 61); and
in the "*Retraction*," at the end of the *Parson's Tale*
(page 199), the "*Book of the Twenty-five Ladies*" is
enumerated among the works of which the poet
repents—but there "xxv" is supposed to have been
by some copyist written for "xix."

¹ Many; German, "viele."

² Nearer and nearer.

³ Nobly furnished.

⁴ Tapestry of silk, made at Arras, in France.

⁵ Of less value, and therefore easier of attainment.

⁶ State canopy.

⁷ The Elysian Fields.

⁸ Sufferers or martyrs for love.

⁹ So royal to behold; so richly adorned.

¹⁰ In keeping, suitably.

¹¹ Fretted; roughened, or adorned, with precious stones.

¹² Danger, in the Provençal Courts of Love, was the allegorical personification of the husband; and Disdain suitably represents the lover's corresponding difficulty from the side of the lady.

¹³ In *The Knight's Tale*, Emily's yellow hair is braided

Amid the sea in tempest and in rain,
Than bidē here, receiving woe and pain

"That ordained is for such as them absent
From Lovē's Court by yearēs long and fele.¹
I lay¹⁸ my life ye shall full soon repent;
For Love will rive your colour, lust, and heal:¹⁹
Eke ye must bait²⁰ on many a heavy meal:
No force,²¹ y-wis; I stirr'd you long ago
To draw to Court," quoth little Philobone.

"Ye shall well see how rough and angry face
The King of Love will show, when ye him see;
By mine advice kneel down and ask him grace,
Eachewing²² peril and adversity;
For well I wot it will none other be;
Comfort is none, nor counsel to your ease;
Why will ye then the King of Love displease?"

Thereupon Philogenet professed humble re-
pentance, and willingness to bear all hardship
and chastisement for his past offence.

These wordēs said, she caught me by the lap,²³
And led me forth into a temple round,
Both large and wide; and, as my blessed hap
And good adventure was, right soon I found
A tabernacle²⁴ raised from the ground,
Where Venus sat, and Cupid by her side;
Yet half for dread I gan my visage hide.

And eft²⁵ again I looked and beheld,
Seeing full sundry people²⁶ in the place,
And mister folk,²⁷ and some that might not weld²⁸
Their limbēs well,—me thought a wonder case.
The temple shone with windows all of glass,
Bright as the day, with many a fair image;
And there I saw the fresh queen of Carthage,

Dido, that brent her beauty²⁹ for the love
Of false Æneas; and the waimenting³⁰
Of her, Annélide, true as turtle dove
To Arcite false;³¹ and there was in painting
Of many a Prince, and many a doughty King,
Whose martyrdom was show'd about the walls;
And how that fele¹ for love had suffer'd fall.³²

Philogenet was astonished at the crowd of
people that he saw, doing sacrifice to the god
and goddess. Philobone informed him that they
came from other courts; those who knelt in

in a tress, or plait, that hung a yard long behind her
back; so that, both as regards colour and fashion, a
singular resemblance seems to have existed between
the female taste of 1369 and that of 1869.

¹⁴ Rebuked, disgraced.

¹⁵ Direct, address.

¹⁶ In an old monkish story—reproduced by Boccaccio, and from him by La Fontaine in the Tale called "*Les Oies de Frère Philippe*"—a young man is brought up without sight or knowledge of women, and, when he sees them on a visit to the city, he is told that they are geese.

¹⁷ Barque, boat.

¹⁸ Wager.

¹⁹ Health.

²⁰ Feed.

²¹ No matter.

²² Avoiding.

²³ Skirt or edge of the garment.

²⁴ A shrine or canopy of stone, supported by pillars.

²⁵ Afterwards.

²⁶ People of many sorts.

²⁷ Handicraftsmen, or tradesmen, who have learned "mysteries."

²⁸ Wield, use.

²⁹ Her own beauteous self.

³⁰ Lamenting.

³¹ The loves "Of Queen Annelida and False Arcite" formed the subject of a short unfinished poem by Chaucer, which was afterwards worked up into *The Knight's Tale*.

³² Calamities, misfortunes.

blue wore the colour in sign of their changeless truth;¹ those in black, who uttered cries of grief, were the sick and dying of love. The priests, nuns, hermits, and friars, and all that sat in white, in russet and in green, "wailed of their woe;" and for all people, of every degree, the Court was open and free. While he walked about with Philobone, a messenger from the King entered, and summoned all the new-come folk to the royal presence. Trembling and pale, Philogenet approached the throne of Admetus, and was sternly asked why he came so late to Court. He pleaded that a hundred times he had been at the gate, but had been prevented from entering by failure to see any of his acquaintances, and by shamefacedness. The King pardoned him, on condition that thenceforth he should serve Love; and the poet took oath to do so, "though Death therefor me thirlē² with his spear." When the King had seen all the new-comers, he commanded an officer to take their oaths of allegiance, and show them the Statutes of the Court, which must be observed till death.

And, for that I was letter'd, there I read
The statutes whole of Lovē's Court and hall:
The first statute that on the book was spread,
Was, To be true in thought and deedēs all
Unto the King of Love, the lord royāl;
And, to the Queen, as faithful and as kind
As I could think with heartē, will, and mind.

The second statute, Secretly to keep
Counsel³ of love, not blowing⁴ ev'rywhere
All that I know, and let it sink and fleet;⁵
It may not sound in ev'ry wightē's ear:
Exiling slander ay for dread and fear,
And to my lady, which I love and serve,
Be true and kind, her grace for to deserve.

The third statute was clearly writ also,
Withoutē change to live and die the same,
None other love to take, for weal nor woe,
For blind delight, for earnest nor for game:
Without repent, for laughing or for grame,⁶
To bidē still in full persévérance:
All this was whole the Kingē's ordinance.

The fourth statute, To purchase ever to her,⁷
And stirrē folk to love, and betē⁸ fire
On Venus' altar, here about and there,
And preach to them of love and hot desire,
And tell how love will quitē well their hire:⁹
This must be kept; and loth me to displease:
If love be wroth, pass; for thereby is ease.

The fifth statute, Not to be dangerous,¹⁰
If that a thought would reave¹¹ me of my sleep:
Nor of a sight to be over squaimous;¹²
And so verily this statute was to keep,
To turn and wallow in my bed and weep,
When that my lady, of her cruelty,
Would from her heart exilen all pity.

1 See note 14, page 121. 2 Pierce.
3 Secret. 4 Talking, boasting.
5 Float, swim. 6 Vexation, sorrow.
7 Acquire (new followers) for her, promote her cause.
8 Kindle. 9 Reward their labour.
10 Fastidious, angry. 11 Deprive.
12 Fond, desirous. 12 Matter of indifference.

The sixth statute, It was for me to use
Alone to wander, void of company,
And on my lady's beauty for to muse,
And thinken it no force¹³ to live or die;
And eft again to think¹⁴ the remedf,
How to her grace I might anon attain,
And tell my woe unto my sovēreign.

The sev'nth statute was, To be patiēt,
Whether my lady joyful were or wroth;
For wordēs glad or heavy, diligent,
Whether that she me heldē lefe or loth:¹⁵
And hereupon I put was to mine oath,
Her for to serve, and lowly to obey,
And show my cheer,¹⁶ yea, twenty times a day.

The eighth statute, to my remembrance,
Was, For to speak and pray my lady dear,
With hourly labour and great entendānce,¹⁷
Me for to love with all her heart entere,¹⁸
And me desire and make me joyful cheer,
Right as she is, surmounting every fair;
Of beauty well,¹⁹ and gentle debonair.

The ninth statute, with letters writ of gold,
This was the sentence, How that I and all
Should ever dread to be too overbold
Her to displease; and truly so I shall;
But be content for all thing that may fall,
And meekly take her chastisement and yerd,²⁰
And to offend her ever be afear'd.

The tenth statute was, Equally²¹ to discern
Between the lady and thine ability,
And think thyself art never like to earn,
By right, her mercy nor her equity,
But of her grace and womanly pity:
For, though thyself be noble in thy strenē,²²
A thousand fold more noble is thy Queen.

Thy lifē's lady and thy sovēreign,
That hath thine heart all whole in governance,
Thou may'st no wise it takē to disdain,
To put thee humbly at her ordinance,
And give her free the rein of her pleasānce;
For liberty is thing that women look,²³
And truly else the matter is a crook.²⁴

Th' eleventh statute, Thy signēs for to know
With eye and finger, and with smilēs soft,
And low to couch, and alway for to show,
For dread of spiēs, for to winken oft:
And secretly to bring a sigh aloft,
But still beware of over much resort;
For that peradventure spoileth all thy sport.

The twelfth statute remember to observe:
For all the pain thou hast for love and woe,
All is too lite²⁵ her mercy to deserve,
Thou mustē think, where'er thou ride or go;
And mortal woundēs suffer thou also,
All for her sake, and think it well beset²⁶
Upon thy love, for it may not be bet.²⁷

The thirteenth statute, Whilom is to think

14 To think upon. 15 In love or in loathing.
16 Countenance. 17 Attention, application.
18 Entire. 19 Fountain.
20 Rod; rule, dictation. 21 Equitably, justly.
22 Strain; stock, descent. 22 Things go wrong.
23 Look for, desire to have. 23 Spent. 27 Better (spent).
25 Little.

What thing may best thy lady like and please,
And in thine heart's bottom let it sink :
Some thing devise, and take for it thine ease,
And send it her, that may her heart appease :
Some heart, or ring, or letter, or device,
Or precious stone ; but spare not for no price.

The fourteenth statute eke thou shalt assay
Firmly to keep, the most part of thy life :
Wish that thy lady in thine arm's lay,
And nightly dream, thou hast thy night's wife
Sweetly in arm's, straining her as blife :¹
And, when thou seest it is but fantasy,
See that thou sing not over merrily ;

For too much joy hath oft a woeful end.
It longeth eke this statute for to hold,²
To deem thy lady evermore thy friend,
And think thyself in no wise a cuckold.
In ev'ry thing she doth but as she sho'ld :
Construe the best, believe no tales new,
For many a lie is told, that seems full true.

But think that she, so bounteous and fair,
Could not be false : imagine this algate ;³
And think that wicked tongues would her apair,⁴
Sland'ring her name and worshipful estate,⁵
And lovers true to setten at debate :
And though thou seest a fault right at thine eye,
Excuse it blife,¹ and glose⁶ it prettily.

The fifteenth statute, Use to swear and stare,
And counterfeit a leasing⁷ hardily,⁸
To save thy lady's honour ev'rywhere,
And put thyself for her to fight boldly :
Say she is good, virtuous, and ghostly,⁹
Clear of intent, and heart, and thought, and
will ;
And argue not for reason nor for skill

Against thy lady's pleasure nor intent,
For love will not be counterpled¹⁰ indeed :
Say as she saith, then shalt thou not be shent ;¹¹
"The crow is white ;" "Yea truly, so I rede :"¹²
And aye what thing that she will thee forbid,
Eschew all that, and give her sov'reignty,
Her appetite to follow in all degree.

The sixteenth statute, keep it if thou may :¹³
Sev'n times at night thy lady for to please,
And sev'n at midnight, sev'n at morrow-day,
And drink a candle early for thine ease.
Do this, and keep thine head from all disease,
And win the garland here of lovers all,
That ever came in Court, or ever shall.

Full few, think I, this statute hold and keep ;
But truly this my reason gives me feel,¹⁴
That some lovers should rather fall asleep,
Than take on hand to please so oft and weel.
There lay none oath to this statute adele,¹⁵
But keep who might as gave him his corage :¹⁶
Now get this garland, lusty folk of age !¹⁷

¹ Quickly, eagerly ; for "blive" or "belive."

² It belongs to the proper observance of this statute.

³ By all ways ; at all events.

⁴ Impair, defame.

⁵ Honourable fame.

⁶ Gloss it over.

⁷ Falsehood.

⁸ Boldly.

⁹ Spiritual, pure.

¹⁰ Met with counterpleas.

¹¹ Chidden, disgraced.

¹² Judge, declare.

¹³ It will be seen afterwards that Philogenet does not relish it, and pleads for its relaxation.

Now win who may, ye lusty folk of youth,
This garland fresh, of flowers red and white,
Purple and blue, and colours full uncouth,¹⁸
And I shall crown him king of all delight !
In all the Court there was not, to my sight,
A lover true, that he was not adread,
When he express¹⁹ had heard the statute read.

The sev'nteenth statute, When age approach-
eth on,
And lust is laid, and all the fire is quaint,²⁰
As freshly then thou shalt begin to fon,²¹
And doat in love, and all her image paint
In thy remembrance, till thou gin to faint,
As in the first season thine heart began :
And her desire, though thou nor may nor can

Perform thy living actual and lust ;
Register this in thine remembrance :
Eke when thou may'st not keep thy thing from
rust,
Yet speak and talk of pleasant dalliance ;
For that shall make thine heart rejoice and
dance ;

And when thou may'st no more the game assay,
The statute bids thee pray for them that may.

The eighteenth statute, wholly to commend,
To please thy lady, is, That thou eschew
With sluttishness thyself for to offend ;
Be jolly, fresh, and feat,²² with thing's new,
Courtly with manner, this is all thy due,
Gentle of port, and loving cleanliness ;
This is the thing that liketh thy mistress.

And not to wander like a dulled ass,
Ragged and torn, disguised in array,
Ribald in speech, or out of measure pass,
Thy bound exceeding ; think on this alway :
For women be of tender heart's ay,
And lightly set their pleasure in a place ;
When they misthink,²³ they lightly let it pace.

The nineteenth statute, Meat and drink for-
get :
Each other day see that thou fast for love,
For in the Court they live without a eat,
Save such as comes from Venus all about ;
They take no heed, in pain of great reprove,²⁴
Of meat and drink, for that is all in vain
Only they live by sight of their sov'reign.

The twentieth statute, last of ev'ry one,
Enrol it in thy heart's privity ;
To wring and wail, to turn, and sigh, and groan
When that thy lady absent is from thee ;
And eke renew²⁵ the word's all that she
Between you twain hath said, and all the cheer
That thee hath made thy life's lady dear.

And see thy heart in quiet nor in rest
Sojourn, till time thou see thy lady eft,²⁶
But whe'er²⁷ she won²⁸ by south, or east, or west,

¹⁴ My reason enables me to perceive.

¹⁵ Annexed.

¹⁶ As his heart inspired him.

¹⁷ That is, folk of lusty age.

¹⁸ Strange.

¹⁹ Plainly.

²⁰ Quenched.

²¹ Fondle, play the fool.

²² Dainty, neat, handsome ; the same as "fetis,"
oftener used in Chaucer ; the adverb "feetly" is still
used, as applied to dancing, &c.

²³ Think wrongly.

²⁴ On pain of great reproach.

²⁵ Recall to mind.

²⁶ Again.

²⁷ Whether.

²⁸ Dwell.

With all thy force now see it be not left :
Be diligent, till time¹ thy life be reft,
In that thou may'st, thy lady for to see ;
This statute was of old antiquity.

The officer, called Rigour—who is incorruptible by partiality, favour, prayer, or gold—made them swear to keep the statutes; and, after taking the oath, Philogenet turned over other leaves of the book, containing the statutes of women. But Rigour sternly bade him forbear; for no man might know the statutes that belong to women.

"In secret wise they kept² be full close ;
They sound³ each one to liberty, my friend ;
Pleasant they be, and to their own purpose ;
There wot⁴ no wight of them, but God and fiend,
Nor aught shall wit, unto the world's end.
The queen hath giv'n me charge, in pain to die,
Never to read nor see them with mine eye.

"For men shall not so near of counsel be'n
With womanhead, nor known of their guise,
Nor what they think, nor of their wit th' engine ;⁴
I me report⁵ to Solomon the wise,
And mighty Samson, which beguiled thrice
With Delilah was ; he wot that, in a throw,
There may no man statute of women know.

"For it peradventure may right so befall,
That they be bound by nature to deceive,
And spin, and weep, and sugar strew on gall,⁶
The heart of man to ravish and to reave,
And whet their tongue as sharp as sword or
gleve :⁷

It may betide this is their ordinance,
So must they lowly do their observance,

"And keep the statute given them of kind,⁸
Of such as Love hath giv'n them in their life.
Men may not wit why turneth every wind,
Nor wax⁹ wise, nor be inquisitive
To know secret of maid, widow, or wife ;
For they their statutes have to them reserved,
And never man to know them hath deserved."

Rigour then sent them forth to pay court to Venus, and pray her to teach them how they might serve and please their dames, or to provide with ladies those whose hearts were yet vacant. Before Venus knelt a thousand sad petitioners, entreating her to punish "the false untrue," that had broken their vows, "barren of ruth, untrue of what they said, now that their lust and pleasure is allay'd." But the mourners were in a minority ;

Yet eft again, a thousand milliön,
Rejoicing, love, leading their life in bliss :
They said : "Venus, redress⁹ of all divisiön,
Goddess eternal, thy name heried¹⁰ is !
By lov's bond is knit all thing, y-wis,¹¹
Beast unto beast, the earth to water wan,¹²
Bird unto bird, and woman unto man ;¹³

¹ Until the time that.

² Tend, accord.

³ Craft, scheming skill.

⁴ Knows.

⁵ I refer for evidence. Solomon was beguiled by his heathenish wives to forsake the worship of the true God ; Samson fell a victim to the wiles of Delilah.

⁶ Compare the speech of Proserpine to Pluto, in The Merchant's Tale, page 118.

⁷ Glaive, sword.

⁸ By nature.

"This is the life of joy that we be in,
Resembling life of heav'nly paradise ;
Love is axiler ay of vice and sin ;
Love maketh heart's lusty to devise ;
Honour and grace have they in ev'ry wise,
That be to lov's law obediënt ;
Love maketh folk benign and diligent ;

"Aye stirring them to dread¹⁴ vice and shame :
In their degree it makes them honourable ;
And sweet it is of love to bear the name,
So that his love be faithful, true, and stable :
Love pruneth him to seemen amiable ;
Love hath no fault where it is exercis'd,
But sole¹⁵ with them that have all love despis'd :

And they conclude with grateful honours to the goddess—rejoicing that they are hers in heart, and all inflamed with her grace and heavenly fear. Philogenet now entreats the goddess to remove his grief ; for he also loves, and hotly, only he does not know where—

"Save only this, by God and by my troth ;
Troubled I was with slumber, sleep, and sloth
This other night, and in a visioön
I saw a woman roamen up and down,

"Of mean stature,¹⁶ and seemly to behold,
Lusty and fresh, demure of countenance,
Young and wellshap'd, with hair's sheen¹⁷ as gold,
With eyne as crystal, farced¹⁷ with pleasance ;
And she gan stir mine heart a lite¹⁸ to dance ;
But suddenly she vanish gan right there :
Thus I may say, I love, and wot¹⁹ not where."

If he could only know this lady, he would serve and obey her with all benignity ; but if his destiny were otherwise, he would gladly love and serve his lady, whosoever she might be. He called on Venus for help to possess his queen and heart's life, and vowed daily war with Diana : "that goddess chaste I keepen²⁰ in no wise to serve ; a fig for all her chastity !" Then he rose and went his way, passing by a rich and beautiful shrine, which, Philobone informed him, was the sepulchre of Pity. "A tender creature," she said,

"Is shrined there, and Pity is her name.
She saw an eagle wreak²¹ him on a fly,
And pluck his wing, and eke him, in his game ;²²
And tender heart of that hath made her die :
Eke she would weep, and mourn right piteously,
To see a lover suffer great distress.
In all the Court was none, as I do guess,

"That could a lover half so well avail,²³
Nor of his woe the torment or the rage
Aslake ;²⁴ for he was sure, without fail,
That of his grief she could the heat assuage.
Instead of Pity, speedeth hot Courage

⁹ Redresser, healer.

¹⁰ Glorified.

¹¹ Assuredly.

¹² Pale.

¹³ See note 3, page 46, for a parallel.

¹⁴ Only.

¹⁵ Of middling height.

¹⁶ Shining, bright.

¹⁷ Literally, stuffed, crammed ; laden with pleasure.

¹⁸ Little.

¹⁹ Know.

²⁰ Care.

²¹ Avenge.

²² For sport.

²³ Help.

²⁴ Assuage.

The matters all of Court, now she is dead ;
I me report in this to womanhead.¹

"For wail, and weep, and cry, and speak, and
pray,—

Women would not have pity on thy plaint ;
Nor by that means to ease thine heart convey,
But thee receivē for their own talēt :²
And say that Pity caus'd thee, in consent
Of ruth,³ to take thy service and thy pain,
In that thou may'st, to please thy sovereign."

Philobone now promised to lead Philogenet
to "the fairest lady under sun that is," the
"mirror of joy and bliss," whose name is Rosial,
and "whose heart as yet is given to no wight ;"
suggesting that, as he also was "with love but
light advanc'd," he might set this lady in the
place of her of whom he had dreamed. Enter-
ing a chamber gay, "there was Rosial, womanly
to see ;" and the subtle-piercing beams of her
eyes wounded Philogenet to the heart. When
he could speak, he threw himself on his knees,
beseeching her to cool his fervent woe :

For there I took full purpose in my mind,
Unto her grace my painful heart to bind.

For, if I shall all fully her describe,⁴
Her head was round, by compass of natūre ;
Her hair as gold, she passed all alive,
And lily forehead had this créature,
With lively browēs flaw,⁵ of colour pure,
Between the which was mean disseverance
From ev'ry brow, to show a due distānce.

Her nose directed straight, even as line,
With form and shape thereto convenient,
In which the goddēs' milk-white path⁶ doth
shine ;

And eke her eyne be bright and orient
As is the smaragd,⁷ unto my judgment,
Or yet these starrēs heav'nly, small, and bright ;
Her visage is of lovely red and white.

Her mouth is short, and shut in little space,
Flaming somedeal,⁸ not over red I mean,
With pregnant lips, and thick to kiss, percase⁹
(For lippēs thin, not fat, but ever lean,
They serve of naught, they be not worth a bean ;
For if the bass¹⁰ be full, there is delight ;
Maximian¹¹ truly thus doth he write).

But to my purpose : I say, white as snow
Be all her teeth, and in order they stand
Of one statūre ; and eke her breath, I trow,
Surmounteth all odoūrs that e'er I fand
In sweetness ; and her body, face, and hand
Be sharply slender, so that, from the head
Unto the foot, all is but womanhead.¹²

I hold my peace of other thingēs hid :

¹ For evidence I refer to the behaviour of women themselves.

² Inclination, pleasure.

³ Compassion.

⁴ Describe.

⁵ Yellow eyebrows ; Latin, "flavus," French, "fauve."

⁶ The galaxy.

⁷ Emerald.

⁸ Somewhat.

⁹ As it chanced.

¹⁰ Kiss ; French, "baiser ;" and hence the more vulgar "buss."

¹¹ Cornelius Maximianus Gallus flourished in the time of the Emperor Anastasius ; in one of his elegies, he

Here shall my soul, and not my tongue, bewray ;
But how she was array'd, if ye me bid,
That shall I well discover you and say :
A band¹³ of gold and silk, full fresh and gay,
With hair in tress,¹⁴ y-broidered full well,
Right smoothly kempt,¹⁵ and shining every deal.

About her neck a flow'r of fresh device
With rubies set, that lusty were to see'n ;
And she in gown was, light and summer-wise,
Shapen full well, the colour was of green,
With aureate scint¹⁶ about her sidēs clean,
With divers stonēs, precious and rich :
Thus was she ray'd,¹⁷ yet saw I ne'er her lich.¹⁸

If Jove had but seen this lady, Calisto and
Alcmēna had never lain in his arms, nor had he
loved the fair Europa, nor Danaë, nor Antiopé ;
"for all their beauty stood in Rosial ; she
seemed like a thing celestial." By and by,
Philogenet presented to her his petition for
love, which she heard with some haughtiness ;
she was not, she said, well acquainted with him,
she did not know where he dwelt, nor his name
and condition. He informed her that "in art
of love he writes," and makes songs that may
be sung in honour of the King and Queen of
Love. As for his name—

"My name ? alas, my heart, why mak'st thou
strange ?¹⁹

Philogenet I call'd am far and near,
Of Cambridge clerk, that never think to change
From you, that with your heav'nly streamēs²⁰
clear

Ravish my heart, and ghost, and all in fere :²¹
Since at the first I writ my bill²² for grace,
Me thinks I see some mercy in your face ;"

And again he humbly pressed his suit. But
the lady disdained the idea that, "for a word of
sugar'd eloquence," she should have compassion
in so little space ; "there come but few who
speedē here so soon." If, as he says, the beams
of her eyes pierce and fret him, then let him
withdraw from her presence :

"Hurt not yourself, through folly, with a look ;
I would be sorry so to make you sick !
A woman should beware eke whom she took :
Ye be a clerk : go searchē well my book,
If any women be so light²³ to win :
Nay, bide a while, though ye were all my kin."²⁴

He might sue and serve, and wax pale, and
green, and dead, without murmuring in any
wise ; but whereas he desired her hastily to lean
to love, he was unwise, and must cease that
language. For some had been at Court for
twenty years, and might not obtain their mis-

professed a preference for flaming and somewhat
swelling lips, which, when he tasted them, would give
him full kisses.

¹³ Womanly perfection.

¹⁸ Band.

¹⁴ Plaited in tresses.

¹⁵ Combed.

¹⁶ Golden cincture or girdle.

¹⁷ Arrayed.

¹⁹ Like, match.

¹⁹ Why so cold or distant ?

²⁰ Beams, glances.

²¹ All together.

²² Petition.

²³ Easy.

²⁴ My whole kindred.

tresses' favour; therefore she marvelled that he was so bold as to treat of love with her. Philogenet, on this, broke into pitiful lamentation; bewailing the hour in which he was born, and assuring the unyielding lady that the frosty grave and cold must be his bed, unless she relented.

With that I fell in swoon, and dead as stone,
With colour slain,¹ and wan as ashes pale;
And by the hand she caught me up anon:
"Arise," quoth she; "what? have ye drunken dwale?"²

Why asleep ye? It is no nightertale."³
"Now mercy! sweet," quoth I, y-wis afraid;
"What thing," quoth she, "hath made you so dismay'd?"

She said that by his hue she knew well that he was a lover; and if he were secret, courteous, and kind, he might know how all this could be allayed. She would amend all that she had missaid, and set his heart at ease; but he must faithfully keep the statutes, "and break them not for sloth nor ignorance." The lover requests, however, that the sixteenth may be released or modified, for it "doth him great grievance;" and she complies.

And softly then her colour gan appear,
As rose so red, throughout her visage all;
Wherefore methinks it is according her⁴
That she of right be called Rosial.
Thus have I won, with wordes great and small,
Some goodly word of her that I love best,
And trust she shall yet set mine heart in rest.

Rosial now told Philobone to conduct Philogenet all over the Court, and show him what lovers and what officers dwelt there; for he was yet a stranger.

And, stalking soft with easy pace, I saw
About the king standen all environ,⁵
Attendance, Diligence, and their fellow
Furtherer, Esperance,⁶ and many one;
Dread-to-offend there stood, and not alone;
For there was eke the cruel adversair,
The lover's foe, that called is Despair;

Which unto me spake angrily and fell,⁷
And said, my lady me deceivē shall:
"Trow'st thou," quoth she, "that all that she did tell

Is true? Nay, nay, but under honey gall.
Thy birth and hers they be no thing egal:⁸
Cast off thine heart,⁹ for all her wordes white,
For in good faith she loves thee but a lite.¹⁰

"And eke remember, thine ability
May not compare with her, this well thou wot."
Yea, then came Hope and said, "My friend,
let be!

Believe him not: Despair he gins to doat."
"Alas," quoth I, "here is both cold and hot:
The one me biddeth love, the other nay;
Thus wot I not what me is best to say.

"But well wot I, my lady granted me
Truly to be my woundē's remedy;
Her gentleness¹¹ may not infected be
With doubleness,¹² this trust I till I die."
So cast I t' avoid Déspair's company,
And takē Hope to counsel and to friend.
"Yea, keep that well," quoth Philobone, "in mind."

And there beside, within a bay windōw,
Stood one in green, full large of breadth and length,
His beard as black as feathers of the crow;
His name was Lust, of wondrous might and strength;

And with Delight to argue there he think'th,
For this was alway his opiniōn,
That love was sin: and so he hath begun

To reason fast, and ledge authority:¹³
"Nay," quoth Delight, "love is a virtue clear,
And from the soul his progress holdeth he:
Blind appetite of lust doth often steer,¹⁴
And that is sin; for reason lacketh there:
For thou dost think thy neighbour's wife to win;
Yet think it well that love may not be sin;

"For God, and saint, they love right verily,
Void of all sin and vice: this know I weel,¹⁵
Affection of flesh is sin truly;
But very¹⁶ love is virtue, as I feel;
For very love may frail desire akele:¹⁷
For very love is love withoutē sin."
"Now stint,"¹⁸ quoth Lust, "thou speak'st not worth a pin."

And there I left them in their arguing,
Roaming farther into the castle wide,
And in a corner Liar stood talking
Of leasings¹⁹ fast, with Flattery there beside;
He said that women ware²⁰ attire of pride,
And men were found of nature variant,
And could be false and showē beau semblant.²¹

Then Flattery bespake and said, y-wis:
"See, so she goes on pattens fair and feat;²²
It doth right well: what pretty man is this
That roameth here? now truly drink nor meat
Need I not have, my heart for joy doth beat
Him to behold, so is he goodly fresh:
It seems for love his heart is tender and nesh."²³

This is the Court of lusty folk and glad,
And well becomes their habit and array:
O why be some so sorry and so sad,
Complaining thus in black and white and gray?
Friars they be, and monkēs, in good fay:²⁴
Alas, for ruth!²⁵ great dole²⁶ it is to see,
To see them thus bewail and sorry be.

¹ Deathlike.

² Sleeping potion, narcotic. See note 30, page 57.

³ Night-time. ⁴ Appropriate to her.

⁵ Around; French, "à l'environ."

⁶ Hope. ⁷ Cruelly, fiercely.

⁸ Equal. ⁹ From confidence in her.

¹⁰ But little. ¹¹ Noble nature.

¹² Duplicity.

¹³ Allege authorities, or adduce examples.

¹⁴ Stir, or guide (the heart).

¹⁵ True, perfect.

¹⁶ Cease.

¹⁷ Wore.

¹⁸ Put on plausible appearances to deceive.

¹⁹ Pretty, neat.

²⁰ Soft, delicate; Anglo-Saxon, "nesc."

²¹ Faith.

²² Sorrow.

²³ Well.

²⁴ Cool, allay.

²⁵ Falsehoods.

²⁶ Pity.

See how they cry and ring their handes white,
For they so soon went to religioun!¹
And eke the nuns with veil and wimple plight,²
Their thought is, they be in confusioun:
"Alas," they say, "we feign perfectioun,³
In clothës wide, and lack our liberty;
But all the sin must on our friendës be."⁴

"For, Venus wot, we would as fain⁵ as ye,
That be attired here and well beseen,⁶
Desirë man, and love in our degree,
Firm and faithful, right as would the Queen:
Our friendës wick', in tender youth and green,
Against our will made us religiuous;
That is the cause we mourn and wailë thus."

Then said the monks and friars in the tide,⁷
"Well may we curse our abbeyes and our place,
Our statutes sharp to sing in copës wide,⁸
Chastely to keep us out of lovë's grace,
And never to feel comfort nor solace;⁹
Yet suffer we the heat of lovë's fire,
And after some other haply we desire."

"O Fortune cursed, why now and wherefore
Hast thou," they said, "bereft us liberty,
Since Nature gave us instrument in store,
And appetite to love and lovers be?
Why must we suffer such adversity,
Dian' to serve, and Venus to refuse?
Full often sithe¹⁰ these matters do us muse."¹¹

"We serve and honour, sore against our will,
Of chastity the goddess and the queen;
Us liefer were¹² with Venus bidë still,
And have regard for love, and subject be'n
Unto these women courtly, fresh, and sheen.¹³
Fortune, we curse thy wheel of variance!
Where we were well, thou reavest¹⁴ our pleas-
ance."

Thus leave I them, with voice of plaint and care,
In raging woe crying full piteously;
And as I went, full naked and full bare
Some I beheld, looking dispiteously,
On Poverty that deadly cast their eye;
And "Well-away!" they cried, and were not fain,
For they might not their glad desire attain.

For lack of riches worldly and of good,
They ban and curse, and weep, and say, "Alas!
That povert' hath us hent,¹⁵ that whilom stood
At heartë's ease, and free and in good case!
But now we dare not show ourselves in place,
Nor us embold¹⁶ to dwell in company,
Where as our heart would love right faithfully."

¹ Because they took religious vows so young.

² Plaited, folded.

³ Perfectly holy life, in the performance of vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and other modes of mortifying the flesh.

⁴ Who made us take the vows before they knew our own dispositions, or ability, to keep them.

⁵ Gladly.

⁶ Gaily and elegantly clothed—in contrast with their own poor and sad-coloured robes.

⁷ At the same time.

⁸ The large vestment worn in singing the service in the choir. In Chaucer's time it seems to have been a distinctively clerical piece of dress; so, in the prologue to *The Monk's Tale* (page 166), the Host, lamenting that so stalwart a man as the Monk should have gone into religion, exclaims, "Alas! why wearest thou so wide a cope?"

And yet againward shrieked ev'ry nun,
The pang of love so strained them to cry:
"Now woe the time," quoth they, "that we be
boun'¹⁷!"

This hateful order nice¹⁸ will do us die!
We sigh and sob, and bleeden inwardly,
Fretting ourselves with thought and hard com-
plaint,
That nigh for love we waxë wood¹⁹ and faint."

And as I stood beholding here and there,
I was ware of a sort²⁰ full languishing,
Savage and wild of looking and of cheer,
Their mantles and their clothës aye tearing;
And oft they were of Nature complaining,
For they their members lacked, foot and hand,
With visage wry, and blind, I understand.

They lacked shape and beauty to prefer
Themselves in love: and said that God and
Kind²¹

Had forged²² them to worshipping the sterre,²³
Venus the bright, and leften all behind²⁴
His other workës clean and out of mind:
"For other have their full shape and beauty,
And we," quoth they, "be in deformity."

And nigh to them there was a company,
That have the Sisters warray'd²⁵ and missaid,
I mean the three of fatal destiny,²⁶
That be our workers: suddenly abraid,²⁷
Out gan they cry as they had been afraid;
"We curse," quoth they, "that ever hath Nature
Y-formed us this woeful life t' endure."

And there eke was Contrite,²⁸ and gan repent,
Confessing whole the wound that Cytherë²⁹
Had with the dart of hot desire him sent,
And how that he to love must subject be:
Then held he all his scornës vanity,
And said that lovers held a blissful life,
Young men and old, and widow, maid, and wife.

"Bereave me, Goddess!" quoth he, "of thy
might,
My scornës all and scoffës, that I have
No power for to mocken any wight
That in thy service dwell: for I did rave;
This know I well right now, so God me save,
And I shall be the chief post³⁰ of thy faith,
And love uphold, the réverse whoso saith."

Dissemble³¹ stood not far from him in truth,
With party³² mantle, party hood and hose;
And said he had upon his lady ruth,³³
And thus he wound him in, and gan to glose,

⁹ Delight.

¹⁰ Full many a time.

¹¹ Cause us to ponder or wonder.

¹² We would rather.

¹³ Bright, beautiful.

¹⁴ Takest away.

¹⁵ Seized, overtaken.

¹⁶ Make bold, venture.

¹⁷ Bound.

¹⁸ Foolish (that is, into which we foolishly entered).

¹⁹ Mad.

²⁰ A company or class of people.

²¹ Nature.

²² Fashioned, designed.

²³ Star.

²⁴ Had left them inferior to.

²⁵ Reproached, assailed with blame.

²⁶ The three Fates.

²⁷ Aroused.

²⁸ Contrition, who repents that once he spurned the sway of Love.

²⁹ Cythera—Venus, so called from the name of the island, Cythera, into which her worship was first introduced from Phœnicia.

³⁰ Prop, pillar.

³¹ Dissimulation.

³² Parti-coloured.

³³ Pity.

Of his intent full double, I suppose :
In all the world he said he lov'd her weel ;
But ay me thought he lov'd her ne'er a deal.¹

Eke Shamefastness was there, as I took heed,
That blushed red, and durst not be y-know
She lover was, for thereof had she dread ;
She stood and hung her visage down alow ;
But such a sight it was to see, I trow,
As of these roses ruddy on their stalk :
There could no wight her spy to speak or talk

In lovē's art, so gan she to abash,
Nor durst not utter all her privy :
Many a stripe and many a grievous lash
She gave to them that wouldē lovers be,
And hinder'd sore the simple commonalty,
That in no wise durst grace and mercy crave,
For were not she,² they need but ask and have ;

Where if they now approachē for to speak,
Then Shamefastness returneth them³ again :
They think, "If we our secret counsel break,
Our ladies will have scorn on us certáin,
And peradventure thinkē great disdain :"
Thus Shamefastness may bringen in Despair ;
When she is dead the other will be heir.

"Come forth Avaunter!⁴ now I ring thy
bell !"

I spied him soon ; to God I make avow,⁵
He looked black as fiendēs do in Hell :
"The first," quoth he, "that ever I did wow,⁶
Within a word she came,⁷ I wot not how,
So that in armēs was my lady free,
And so have been a thousand more than she.

"In England, Britain,⁸ Spain, and Picardy,
Artois, and France, and up in high Hollánd,
In Burgoyne,⁹ Naples, and in Italy,
Navarre, and Greece, and up in heathen land,
Was never woman yet that would withstand
To be at my commandment when I wo'ld :
I lacked¹⁰ neither silver coin nor gold.

"And there I met with this estate and that ;
And her I broach'd, and her, and her, I trow :
Lo ! there goes one of mine ; and, wot ye what ?
Yon fresh attired have I laid full low ;
And such one yonder eke right well I know ;
I kept the statute¹¹ when we lay y-fere :¹²
And yet¹³ yon same hath made me right good
cheer."

Thus hath Avaunter blowen ev'rywhere
All that he knows, and more a thousand fold ;
His ancestry of kin was to Liér,¹⁴
For first he maketh promise for to hold
His lady's counsel, and it not unfold ;
Wherefore, the secret when he doth unshit,¹⁵
Then lieth he, that all the world may wit.

For falsing so his promise and behest,¹⁶
I wonder sore he hath such fantasy ;¹⁷
He lacketh wit, I trow, or is a beast,
That can no bet¹⁸ himself with reason gny.¹⁹
By mine advice,²⁰ Love shall be contrarý
To his avail,²¹ and him eke dishonour,
So that in Court he shall no more sojoúr.²²

"Take heed," quoth she, this little Philobone,
"Where Envy rocketh in the corner yond,²³
And sitteth dark ; and ye shall see anon
His lean body, fading both face and hand ;
Himself he fretteth,²⁴ as I understand
(Witness of Ovid Metamorphoseos²⁵) ;
The lover's foe he is, I will not glose.²⁶

"For where a lover thinketh him promote,²⁷
Envy will grudge, repining at his weal ;
It swelleth sore about his heartē's root,
That in no wise he cannot live in heal ;²⁸
And if the faithful to his lady steal,
Envy will noise and ring it round about,
And say much worse than done is, out of doubt."

And Privy Thought, rejoicing of himself,
Stood not far thence in habit marvellous ;
"Yon is," thought I, "some spirit or some elf,
His subtile image is so curious :
How is," quoth I, "that he is shaded thus
With yonder cloth, I n'ot²⁹ of what colór ?"
And near I went and gan to lear and pore,³⁰

And frained³¹ him a question full hard.
"What is," quoth I, "the thing thou lovest best ?
Or what is boot³² unto thy painēs hard ?
Me thinks thou livest here in great unrest,
Thou wand'rest aye from south to east and west,
And east to north ; as far as I can see,
There is no place in Court may holdē thee.

"Whom followest thou ? where is thy heart
y-set ?
But my demand assoil,³³ I thee require."
"Methought," quoth he, "no creatúre may let³⁴
Me to be here, and where as I desire ;
For where as absence hath done³⁵ out the fire,
My merry thought it kindleth yet again,
That bodily, me thinks, with my sov'reign³⁶

"I stand, and speak, and laugh, and kiss,
and halse ;³⁷
So that my thought comforteth me full oft :
I think, God wot, though all the world be false,
I will be true ; I think also how soft
My lady is in speech, and this on loft
Bringeth my heart with joy and great gladnéss ;
This privy thought allays my heaviness.

"And what I think, or where, to be, no man
In all this Earth can tell, y-wis, but I :

¹ Never a jot.

² But for her.

³ Turns them back.

⁴ Boaster : Philobone calls him out.

⁵ Confession.

⁶ Woo.

⁷ She was won with a single word.

⁸ Brittany ; Lesser Britain.

⁹ Burgundy ; French, "Bourgogne."

¹⁰ Needed (for my conquests).

¹¹ The sixteenth.

¹² Together.

¹³ Also.

¹⁴ Liar.

¹⁵ Unshut, disclose.

¹⁶ Promise, trust.

¹⁷ Such a fancy or liking.

¹⁸ Better.

¹⁹ Guide.

²⁰ If my counsel were followed.

²¹ Advantage.

²² Sojourn, remain.

²³ Yonder.

²⁴ Devoureth.

²⁵ Lib. ii. 768 *et seqq.*, where a general description of Envy is given.

²⁶ I will speak plainly.

²⁷ To promote himself.

²⁸ Health, comfort.

²⁹ Know not.

³⁰ To ascertain and gaze curiously.

³¹ Asked.

³² Remedy.

³³ Answer my question.

³⁴ Hinder.

³⁵ Put.

³⁶ My lady.

³⁷ Embrace.

And eke there is no swallow swift, nor swan
So wight¹ of wing, nor half so yern² can fly;
For I can be, and that right suddenly,
In Heav'n, in Hell, in Paradise, and here,
And with my lady, when I will desire.

"I am of counsel far and wide, I wot,
With lord and lady, and their privy
I wot it all; but, be it cold or hot,
They shall not speak without licence of me.
I mean, in such as seasonable³ be,
Tho⁴ first the thing is thought within the heart,
Ere any word out from the mouth astart."⁵

And with the word Thought bade farewell and
yede:⁶

Eke forth went I to see the Court's guise,
And at the door came in, so God me speed,
Two courtiers of age and of assise⁷
Like high, and broad, and, as I me advise,
The Golden Love and Leaden Love they hight:⁸
The one was sad, the other glad and light.

At this point there is a hiatus in the poem,
which abruptly ceases to narrate the tour of
Philogenet and Philobone round the Court, and
introduces us again to Rosial, who is speaking
thus to her lover, apparently in continuation of
a confession of love:

"Yes! draw your heart, with all your force
and might,
To lustiness, and be as ye have said."

She admits that she would have given him no
drop of favour, but that she saw him "wax so
dead of countenance;" then Pity "out of her
shrine arose from death to life," whisperingly
entreating that she would do him some pleas-
ance. Philogenet protests his gratitude to Pity,
his faithfulness to Rosial; and the lady, thank-
ing him heartily, bids him abide with her till
the season of May, when the King of Love and
all his company will hold his feast fully royally
and well. "And there I bode till that the
season fell."

On May Day, when the lark began to rise,
To matins went the lusty nightingale,
Within a temple shapen hawthorn-wise;
He might not sleep in all the nightertale,⁹
But "*Domine labia*"¹⁰ gan he cry and gale,¹¹

¹ Nimble, speedy.

³ Eagerly, swiftly.

² Prudent.

⁴ Then; at the time when.

⁵ Escape.

⁶ Went away.

⁷ Size.

⁸ They represent successful and unsuccessful love;
the first kindled by Cupid's golden darts, the second by
his leaden arrows.

⁹ Night-time.

¹⁰ "*Domine, labia mea aperies—et os meum annun-
tiabit laudem tuam*" (Psalms li. 16), was the verse with
which Matins began. The stanzas which follow con-
tain a paraphrase of the matins for Trinity Sunday,
allegorically setting forth the doctrine that love is the
all-controlling influence in the government of the
universe.

¹¹ Call out.

¹² Now bewray (show forth) thy praise.

¹³ "*Venite, exultemus*," are the first words of Psalm
xcv., called the "Invitatory."

¹⁴ The opening words of Psalm viii.; "O Lord our
Lord."

¹⁵ Make.

¹⁶ Psalm xix. 1; "The heavens declare (thy glory)."

¹⁷ Parrot.

"My lippes open, Lord of Love, I cry,
And let my mouth thy praising now bewry."¹²

The eagle sang "*Venite*,"¹³ bodies all,
And let us joy to love that is our health."
And to the deak anon they gan to fall,
And who came late he pressed in by stealth:
Then said the falcon, "Our own heartes' wealth,
'*Domine Dominus noster*,'"¹⁴ I wot,
Ye be the God that do¹⁵ us burn thus hot."

"*Cæli enarrant*,"¹⁶ said the popinjay,¹⁷
"Your might is told in Heav'n and firmament."
And then came in the goldfinch fresh and gay,
And said this psalm with heartily glad intent,
"*Domini est terra*;"¹⁸ this Latin intent,¹⁹
The God of Love hath earth in governance:
And then the wren began to skip and dance.

"*Jube Domine*;"²⁰ O Lord of Love, I pray
Command me well this lesson for to read;
This legend is of all that wouldë dey²¹
Martyrs for love; God yet their soulës speed!
And to thee, Venus, sing we, out of dread,²²
By influence of all thy virtue great,
Beseeching thee to keep us in our heat."

The second lesson robin redbreast sang,
"Hail to the God and Goddess of our lay!"²³
And to the lectern²⁴ amorously he sprang:
"Hail now," quoth he, "O fresh season of May,
Our moneth glad that singen on the spray!"²⁵
Hail to the flowers, red, and white, and blue,
Which by their virtue maken our lust new!"

The third lesson the turtle-dove took up,
And thereat laugh'd the mavis in a scorn:
He said, "O God, as might I dine or sup,
This foolish dove will give us all a horn!
There be right here a thousand better born,
To read this lesson, which as well as he,
And eke as hot, can love in all degree."

The turtle-dove said, "Welcome, welcome
May,
Gladsome and light to lovers that be true!
I thank thee, Lord of Love, that doth purvey
For me to read this lesson all of due;"²⁶
For, in good sooth, of corage²⁷ I pursue
To serve my make²⁸ till death us must depart:"
And then "*Tu autem*"²⁹ sang he all apart.

"*Te Deum amoris*"³⁰ sang the throstel-
cock:³¹

Tubal³² himself, the first musician,

¹² Psalm xxiv. 1; "The earth is the Lord's and the
fulness thereof." The first "nocturn" is now over,
and the lessons from Scripture follow.

¹³ Means.

²⁰ "Command, O Lord;" from Matthew xiv. '28,
where Peter, seeing Christ walking on the water, says
"Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee on the water."

²¹ Die.

²² Doubt.

²³ Law, religion.

²⁴ The reading-desk.

²⁵ Glad month for us that sing upon the bough.

²⁶ In due form.

²⁷ With all my heart.

²⁸ Mate.

²⁹ The formula recited by the reader at the end of
each lesson; "*Tu autem, Domine, miserere nobis*."

"But do thou, O Lord, have pity on us!"

³⁰ "Thee, God of Love (we praise)."

³¹ Thrush.

³² Not Tubal, who was the worker in metals; but
Jubal, his brother, "who was the father of all such
as handle the harp and organ" (Genesis iv. 21).

With key of harmony could not unlock
So sweet a tune as that the throstel can :
"The Lord of Love we praise," quoth he than,¹
And so do all the fowls great and lite ;²
"Honour we May, in false lovers' despite."

"*Dominus regnavit*,"³ said the peacock there,
"The Lord of Love, that mighty prince, y-wis,
He is received here and ev'rywhere :
Now *Jubilate*⁴ sing : " "What meaneth this ?"
Said then the linnet ; "welcome, Lord of bliss !"
Out start the owl with "*Benedicite*,"⁵
"What meaneth all this merry fare ?"⁶ quoth
he.

"*Laudate*,"⁷ sang the lark with voice full,
shrill ;
And eke the kite "*O admirabile* ;"⁸
This quire will through mine ears pierce and
thrill ;
But what? welcome this May season," quoth he ;
"And honour to the Lord of Love must be,
That hath this feast so solemn and so high :"
"*Amen*," said all ; and so said eke the pie.

And forth the cuckoo gan proceed anon,
With "*Benedictus*"⁹ thanking God in haste,

That in this May would visit them each one,
And gladden them all while the feast shall last :
And therewithal a-laughter¹⁰ out he brast ;¹¹
"I thank God that I should end the song,
And all the service which hath been so long."

Thus sang they all the service of the feast,
And that was done right early, to my doom ;¹²
And forth went all the Court, both most and
least,¹³
To fetch the flowers fresh, and branch and
bloom ;
And namely¹⁴ hawthorn brought both page and
groom,
With fresh garlands party blue and white,¹⁵
And then rejoiced in their great delight.

Eke each at other threw the flowers bright,
The primrose, the violet, and the gold ;
So then, as I beheld the royal sight,
My lady gan me suddenly behold,
And with a true love, plighted many a fold,
She smote me through the very heart as blive ;¹⁶
And Venus yet I thank I am alive.

Explicit.

THE CUCKOO AND THE NIGHTINGALE.

[THE noble vindication of true love, as an exalting, purifying, and honour-conferring power, which Chaucer has made in "The Court of Love," is repeated in "The Cuckoo and the Nightingale." At the same time, the close of the poem leads up to "The Assembly of Fowls ;" for, on the appeal of the Nightingale, the dispute between her and the Cuckoo, on the merits and blessings of love, is referred to a parliament of birds, to be held on the morrow after Saint Valentine's Day. True, the assembly of the feathered tribes described by Chaucer, though held on Saint Valentine's Day, and engaged in the discussion of a controversy regarding love, is not occupied with the particular cause which in the present poem the Nightingale appeals to the parliament. But "The Cuckoo and the Nightingale" none the less serves as a link between the two poems ; indicating as it does the nature of those controversies, in matters subject to the supreme control of the King and Queen of Love, which in the subsequent poem we find the courtiers, under the guise of birds, debating in

¹ Then.

² Little.

³ Psalm xciii. 1, "The Lord reigneth." With this began the "*Laudes*," or morning service of praise.

⁴ Psalm c. 1, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord."

⁵ "Bless ye the Lord ;" the opening of the Song of the Three Children.

⁶ Doing, fuss.

⁷ Psalm cxlvii. ; "Praise ye the Lord."

⁸ Psalm viii. 1 ; "O Lord our God, how excellent is thy name."

⁹ The first word of the Song of Zacharias (Luke i. 68) ; "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel."

¹⁰ In laughter.

¹¹ Burst.

¹² Judgment.

¹³ Great and small.

¹⁴ Especially.

¹⁵ In The Knight's Tale we have exemplifications of the custom of gathering and wearing flowers and branches on May Day ; where Emily, "doing observance to May," goes into the garden at sunrise and gathers flowers, "party white and red, to make a sotel garland for her head" (page 27) ; and again, where Arcita rides to the fields "to make him a garland of the greves ; were it of woodbine, or of hawthorn leaves" (page 32.)

¹⁶ Straightway.

full conclave and under legal forms. Exceedingly simple in conception, and written in a metre full of musical irregularity and forcible freedom, "The Cuckoo and the Nightingale" yields in vividness, delicacy, and grace to none of Chaucer's minor poems. We are told that the poet, on the third night of May, is sleepless, and rises early in the morning, to try if he may hear the Nightingale sing. Wandering by a brook-side, he sits down on the flowery lawn, and ere long, lulled by the sweet melody of many birds and the well-accorded music of the stream, he falls into a kind of daze—"not all asleep, nor fully waking." Then (an evil omen) he hears the Cuckoo sing before the Nightingale; but soon he hears the Nightingale request the Cuckoo to remove far away, and leave the place to birds that can sing. The Cuckoo enters into a defence of her song, which becomes a railing accusation against Love and a recital of the miseries which Love's servants endure; the Nightingale vindicates Love in a lofty and tender strain, but is at last overcome with sorrow by the bitter words of the Cuckoo, and calls on the God of Love for help. On this the poet starts up, and, snatching a stone from the brook, throws it at the Cuckoo, who flies away full fast. The grateful Nightingale promises that, for this service, she will be her champion's singer all that May; she warns him against believing the Cuckoo, the foe of Love; and then, having sung him one of her new songs, she flies away to all the other birds that are in that dale, assembles them, and demands that they should do her right upon the Cuckoo. By one assent it is agreed that a parliament shall be held, "the morrow after Saint Valentine's Day," under a maple before the window of Queen Philippa at Woodstock, when judgment shall be passed upon the Cuckoo; then the Nightingale flies into a hawthorn, and sings a lay of love so loud that the poet awakes. The five-line stanza, of which the first, second, and fifth lines agree in one rhyme, the third and fourth in another, is peculiar to this poem; and while the prevailing measure is the decasyllabic line used in the "Canterbury Tales," many of the lines have one or two syllables less. The poem is given here without abridgement.]

THE God of Love, ah! benedicite,
How mighty and how great a lord is he!¹
For he can make of lowe heartes high,
And of high low, and like for to die,
And hardē heartes he can makē free.

He can make, within a little stound,²
Of sickē folkē whole, and fresh, and sound,
And of the whole he can make sick;
He can bind, and unbinden eke,
What he will havē bounden or unbound.

To tell his might my wit may not suffice;
For he can make of wisē folk full nice,³—
For he may do all that he will devise,—
And lithē⁴ folkē to destroyē vice,
And proudē heartes he can make arise.⁵

Shortly, all that ever he will he may;
Against him dare no wight say nay;
For he can glad and grievē whom him liketh,⁶
And who that he will, he laugheth or siketh,⁷
And most his might he sheddeth ever in May.

For every true gentle heartē free,
That with him is, or thinketh for to be,
Against May now shall havē some stirring,⁸
Either to joy, or else to some mourning,
In no season so much, as thinketh me.

For when that they may hear the birdes sing,
And see the flowers and the leavēs spring,
That bringeth into heartē's rémembrance
A manner easē, medled⁹ with grievance,¹⁰
And lusty thoughtēs full of great longing.

¹ These two lines occur also in *The Knight's Tale*; they commence the speech of Theseus on the love-follies of Palamon and Arcita, whom the Duke has just found fighting in the forest (page 34).

² A short time, a moment.

³ Foolish; French, "niais."

⁴ Idle, vicious.

⁵ Cause to tremble.

And of that longing cometh heaviness,
And thereof groweth greatē sickēneas,
And¹¹ for the lack of that that they desire:
And thus in May he heartēs set on fire,
So that they brennen¹² forth in great distress.

I speakē this of feeling truēly;¹³
If I be old and unlusty,
Yet I have felt the sickness thorough May
Both hot and cold, an access ev'ry day,¹⁴
How sore, y-wis, there wot no wight but I.

I am so shaken with the fevers white,
Of all this May asleep I but lite;¹⁵
And also it is not like¹⁶ unto me
That any heartē shouldē sleepy be,
In whom that Love his fiery dart will smite.

But as I lay this other night waking,
I thought how lovers had a tokening,¹⁷
And among them it was a common tale,
That it were good to hear the nightingale
Rather than the lewd cuckoo sing.

And then I thought, anon as¹⁸ it was May,
I would go somewhere to assay
If that I might a nightingale hear;
For yet had I none heard of all that year,
And it was then the thirde night of May.

And anon as I the day espied,
No longer would I in my bed abide;
But to a wood that was fast by,
I went forth alone boldēly,
And held the way down by a brookē's side,

⁶ Whom he pleases.

⁸ Movement, impulse.

¹⁰ Sorrow.

¹² Burn.

¹⁴ Every day a hot and a cold fit.

¹⁵ Very little.

¹⁷ Significance.

⁷ Sigheth.

⁹ Mingled.

¹¹ A stronger reading is "And."

¹³ From experience of my own feeling.

¹⁶ Pleasing.

¹⁸ Whenever.

Till I came to a laund¹ of white and green,
So fair a one had I never in been ;
The ground was green, y-powder'd with daisy,²
The flowers and the greves³ like high,⁴
All green and white ; was nothing ellës seen.

There sat I down among the fairë flow'rs,
And saw the birdës trip out of their bow'rs,
There as they rested them allë the night ;
They were so joyful of the dayë's light,
They began of May for to do honours.

They coud⁵ that service all by rote ;
There was many a lovely note !
Some sangë loud as they had plain'd,
And some in other manner voicë feign'd,
And some all out with the full throat.

They proined⁶ them, and madë them right
gay,
And danc'd and leapt upon the spray ;
And evermorë two and two in fere,⁷
Right so as they had chosen them to-year⁸
In Feverere⁹ upon Saint Valentine's Day.

And the river that I sat upon,¹⁰
It made such a noise as it ran,
Accordant¹¹ with the birdë's harmony,
Me thought it was the bestë melody
That might be heard of any man.

And for delight, I wotë never how,
I fell in such a slumber and a swow,¹²—
Not all asleep, nor fully waking,—
And in that swow me thought I heardë sing
The sorry bird, the lewd cuckow ;

And that was on a tree right fastë by.
But who was then evil apaid but I ?
"Now God," quoth I, "that diëd on the croia,¹³
Give sorrow on thee, and on thy lewëd voice !
Full little joy have I now of thy cry."

And as I with the cuckoo thus gan chide,
I heard, in the next bush beside,
A nightingale so lustily sing,
That her clear voice she madë ring
Through all the greenwood wide.

"Ah, good Nightingale," quoth I then,
"A little hast thou been too long hen ;¹⁴
For here hath been the lewd cuckow,
And sung songs rather¹⁵ than hast thou :
I pray to God that evil fire her bren !"¹⁶

But now I will you tell a wondrous thing :
As long as I lay in that swooning,
Me thought I wist what the birds meant,
And what they said, and what was their intent,
And of their speech I-haddë good knowing.

There heard I the nightingale say :
"Now, good Cuckoo, go somewhere away,
And let us that can singë dwellë here ;

For ev'ry wight escheweth¹⁷ thee to hear,
Thy songës be so elenge,¹⁸ in good fay."¹⁹

"What," quoth she, "what may thee ail now?
It thinketh me, I sing as well as thou,
For my song is both true and plain,
Although I cannot orakel²⁰ so in vain,
As thou dost in thy throat, I wot ne'er how.

"And ev'ry wight may understandë me,
But, Nightingale, so may they not do thee,
For thou hast many a nice quaint²¹ cry ;
I have thee heard say, 'ocy, ocy ;'
How might I know what that should be?"

"Ah fool," quoth she, "wost thou not what
it is?"

When that I say, 'ocy, ocy,' y-wis,
Then mean I that I wouldë wonder fain
That all they were shamefully slain,²²
That meanen aught againë²³ love amiss.

"And also I would that all those were dead,
That thinkë not in love their life to lead,
For who so will the god of Love not serve,
I dare well say he is worthy to sterve,²⁴
And for that skill,²⁵ 'ocy, ocy,' I grede."²⁶

"Ey!" quoth the cuckoo, "this is a quaint²⁷
law,

That every wight shall love or be to-draw !²⁸
But I forsake allë such company ;
For mine intent is not for to die,
Nor ever, while I live, on Lovë's yoke to draw."²⁹

"For lovers be the folk that be alive,
That most diseasë have, and most unthrive,³⁰
And most endure sorrow, woe, and care,
And leastë feelen of welfare :
What needeth it against the truth to strive?"

"What?" quoth she, "thou art all out of
thy mind !
How mightest thou in thy churlishness find
To speak of Lovë's servants in this wise ?
For in this world is none so good service³¹
To ev'ry wight that gentle is of kind ;"³²

"For thereof truly cometh all gladnëss,
All honour and all gentleness,
Worship, ease, and all heartë's lust,
Perfect joy, and full assured trust,
Jollity, pleasance, and freshnëss,

"Lowlihead, largess, and courtesy,
Seemëlihead, and true company,
Dread of shame for to do amiss ;
For he that truly Lovë's servant is,
Were lother³³ to be shamed than to die.

"And that this is sooth that I say,
In that belief I will live and dey ;³⁴
And, Cuckoo, so I read³⁵ that thou do y-wis."

¹ Lawn. ² Thickly strown with the daisy.
³ Groves, bushes. ⁴ Of the same height.
⁵ Knew. ⁶ Pruned, trimmed their feathers.
⁷ In company. ⁸ This year.
⁹ February. ¹⁰ Beside.
¹¹ Agreeing, keeping time with. ¹² Swoon.
¹³ Cross. ¹⁴ Hence, absent.
¹⁵ Sooner. ¹⁶ Burn.
¹⁷ Shuns. ¹⁸ Strange, sorrowful.
¹⁹ Faith. ²⁰ Quaver, sing tremulously.
²¹ Foolish, strange.

²² "Ocy, ocy," is supposed to come from the Latin, "occidere," to kill ; or rather the old French, "occire," "occis," denoting the doom which the nightingale imprecates or supplicates on all who do offence to Love.
²³ Against.
²⁴ Die.
²⁵ Reason.
²⁶ I cry ; Italian, "grido."
²⁷ Strange.
²⁸ Torn to pieces. ²⁹ To put on Love's yoke.
³⁰ Misfortune, disappointment. ³¹ As Love's.
³² Is of gentle, noble nature. ³³ More reluctant.
³⁴ Die. ³⁵ Counsel.

"Then," quoth he, "let me never havē bliss,
If ever I to that counsail obey !

"Nightingale, thou speakest wondrous fair,
But, for all that, is the sooth contrair ;
For love is in young folk but rage,
And in old folk a great dotage ;
Who most it useth, mostē shall enpair.¹

"For thereof come disease and heaviness,
Sorrow and care, and many a great sicknēss,
Despite, debate, anger, envf,
Depraving,² shame, untrust, and jealousy,
Pride, mischief, povert', and woodnēss.

"Loving is an office of despair,
And one thing is therein that is not fair ;
For who that gets of love a little bliss,
But if he be alway therewith, y-wis,
He may full soon of agē have his hair.³

"And, Nightingale, therefore hold thee nigh ;⁴
For, lieve me well, for all thy quaintē cry,
If thou be far or longē from thy make,⁵
Thou shalt be as other that be forsake,
And then thou shalt hoten⁶ as do I."

"Fie," quoth she, "on thy name and on thee !
The god of Lovē let thee never thé !⁷
For thou art worse a thousand fold than wood,⁸
For many one is full worthy and full good,
That had been naught, ne haddē Love y-be.⁹

"For evermore Love his servants amendeth,
And from all evile taches¹⁰ them defendeth,
And maketh them to burn right in a fire,
In truth and in worshipful¹¹ desire,
And, when him liketh, joy enough them sendeth."

"Thou Nightingale," he said, "be still !
For Love hath no reason but his will ;¹²
For ofttime untrue folk he easeth,
And truē folk so bitterly displeaseth,
That for default of grace¹³ he lets them spill."¹⁴

Then took I of the nightingale keep,
How she cast a sigh out of her deep,¹⁵
And said, "Alas, that ever I was bore !
I can for teen¹⁶ not say one wordē more ;"
And right with that word she burst out to weep.

"Alas !" quoth she, "my heartē will to-break
To hearē thus this lewd bird speak
Of Love, and of his worshipful service.
Now, God of Love, thou help me in some wise,
That I may on this cuckoo be awreak !" ¹⁷

Methought then I start up anon,
And to the brook I ran and got a stone,
And at the cuckoo heartily cast ;
And for dread he flew away full fast,
And glad was I when he was gone.

And evermore the cuckoo, as he flay,¹⁸
He saidē, "Farewell, farewell, popinjay,"
As though he had scorned, thought me ;
But ay I hunted him from the tree,
Until he was far out of sight away.

And then came the nightingale to me,
And said, "Friend, forsooth I thank thee
That thou hast lik'd me to rescow ;¹⁹
And one avow to Lovē make I now,
That all this May I will thy singer be."

I thanked her, and was right well apaid :²⁰
"Yea," quoth she, "and be thou not dismay'd,
Though thou have heard the cuckoo erst than²¹
me ;

For, if I live, it shall amended be
The next May, if I be not afraid.

"And one thing I will redē²² thee also,
Believe thou not the cuckoo, the love's foe,²³
For all that he hath said is strong leasng."²⁴
"Nay," quoth I, "thereto shall nothing me
bring

For love, and it hath done me much woe."²⁵

"Yea ? Use," quoth she, "this medicine,
Every day this May ere thou dine :
Go look upon the fresh daisy,
And, though thou be for woe in point to die,
That shall full greatly less thee of thy pine."²⁶

"And look alway that thou be good and true,
And I will sing one of my songēs new
For love of thee, as loud as I may cry :"
And then she began this song full high :
"I shrew²⁷ all them that be of love untrue."

And when she had sung it to the end,
"Now farewell," quoth she, "for I must wend,²⁸
And, God of Love, that can right well and may,
As much joy sendē thee this day,
As any lover yet he ever send !"

Thus took the nightingale her leave of me.
I pray to God alway with her be,
And joy of love he send her evermore,
And shield us from the cuckoo and his lore ;
For there is not so false a bird as he.

Forth she flew, the gentle nightingale,
To all the birdēs that were in that dale,
And got them all into a place in fere,²⁹
And besought them that they would hear
Her disease,³⁰ and thus began her tale.

"Ye wittē well,³¹ it is not for to hide,
How the cuckoo and I fast have chide,³²
Ever since that it was daylight ;
I pray you all that ye do me right
On that foul false unkind bride."³³

¹ Suffer harm.

² Loss of fame or character.

³ Unless he be always fortunate in love pursuits, he may full soon have gray hair, through his anxieties.

⁴ Near the one thou lovest.

⁵ Mate.

⁶ Be called.

⁷ Thrive.

⁸ Mad.

⁹ Who would have been wicked and worthless, if love had not been.

¹⁰ Stains, blemishes ; French, "tache."

¹¹ Honourable.

¹² No guide but his caprice.

¹³ Favour.

¹⁴ Come to ruin or sorrow.

¹⁵ Sighed deeply.

¹⁶ Vexation, grief.

¹⁷ Revenged.

¹⁸ Flew.

¹⁹ Hast been pleased to rescue me.

²⁰ Satisfied.

²¹ Before. It was of evil omen to hear the cuckoo before the nightingale or any other bird.

²² Counsel.

²³ The foe of love.

²⁴ Sheer falsehood.

²⁵ Nothing will bring me to believe the evil the cuckoo has said of love, and it [what the cuckoo has said] has caused me great pain.

²⁶ Assuage thine anguish.

²⁷ Curse.

²⁸ Go.

²⁹ Together.

³⁰ Distress, grievance.

³¹ Ye know well.

³² Chidden, quarrelled.

³³ Bird.

Then spake one bird for all, by one assent :
 " This matter asketh good advisement ;
 For we be fewe birdes here in fere,
 And sooth it is, the cuckoo is not here,
 And therefore we will have a parlement.

" And thereat shall the eagle be our lord,
 And other peers that becn of record,¹
 And the cuckoo shall be after sent ;²
 There shall be given the judgment,
 Or else we shall finally make accord.³

" And this shall be, withoutē nay,⁴
 The morrow after Saint Valentine's Day,
 Under a maplē that is fair and green,
 Before the chamber window of the Queen,⁵
 At Woodstock upon the green lay."⁶

She thanked them, and then her leavē took,
 And into a hawthorn by that brook,
 And there she sat and sang upon that tree,
 " Term of life love hath withhold me ;"⁷
 So loudē, that I with that song awoke.

Explicit.

The Author to His Book.

O LEWD book ! with thy foul rudeness,
 Since thou hast neither beauty nor eloquence,
 Who hath thee caus'd or giv'n the hardness
 For to appear in my lady's presence?

I am full sicker thou know'st her benevolence,
 Full agreeable to all her abyng,⁸
 For of all good she is the best living.

Alas ! that thou ne haddest worthiness,
 To shew to her some pleasant sentence,
 Since that she hath, thorough her gentleness,
 Accepted thee servānt⁹ to her dign reverence !
 O ! me repenteth that I n' had science,
 And leisure als', t' make thee more flourishing,
 For of all good she is the best living.

Beseech her meekly with all lowliness,
 Though I be ferrē¹⁰ from her in absence,
 To think on my truth to her and steadfastness,
 And to abridge of my sorrows the violence,
 Which caused is whereof knoweth your sapi-
 ence ;¹¹

She like¹² among to notify me her liking,
 For of all good she is the best living.

L'Envoy; To the Author's Lady.

Aurore of gladness, day of lustiness,
 Lucern¹³ at night with heav'nly influence
 Illumin'd, root of beauty and goodnēss,
 Suspirēs which I éffund in silence !¹⁴
 Of grace I beseech, allege let your writing
 Now of all good,¹⁵ since ye be best living.

Explicit.

THE ASSEMBLY OF FOWLS.

[In "The Assembly of Fowls"—which Chaucer's "Retractation" (page 199) describes as "The Book of Saint Valentine's Day, or of the Parliament of Birds"—we are presented with a picture of the mediæval "Court of Love" far closer to the reality than we find in Chaucer's poem which bears that express title. We have a regularly constituted conclave or tribunal, under a president whose decisions are final. A difficult question is proposed for the consideration and judgment of the Court—the disputants advancing and vindicating their claims in person. The attendants upon the Court, through specially chosen mouthpieces, deliver their opinions on the cause ; and finally a decision is authoritatively pronounced by the president—which, as in many of the cases actually judged before the Courts of Love in France, places the reasonable and modest wish of a sensitive and chaste lady above all the eagerness of her lovers, all the incongruous counsels of representative courtiers. So far, therefore, as the poem reproduces the characteristic features of procedure in those romantic Middle Age halls of amatory justice, Chaucer's "Assembly of Fowls" is his real "Court of Love ;" for although, in the castle and among the courtiers of Admetus and Alcestis, we have all the personages and machinery necessary for one of those erotic contentions, in the present poem we see the personages and the machinery actually at work, upon another scene and under other guises. The allegory which makes the contention arise out of the loves, and proceed in the assembly, of the feathered race, is quite in keeping with the fanciful yet nature-

¹ Of established, well-known, authority and distinction. ² Sent after, to be summoned or arrested.

³ Effect a reconciliation. ⁴ Without contradiction.

⁵ Philippa of Hainault, wife of Edward III.

⁶ Lawn, lea, level ground.

⁷ Held possession of me, retained me in her service, for the whole term of my life. ⁸ Her merit.

⁹ As servant.

¹⁰ Far.

¹¹ By circumstances whereof your wisdom knows.

¹² May it please her. ¹³ Lamp ; Latin, "lucerna."

¹⁴ What sighs (French, "soupirs ;" Latin, "suspiria") do I pour forth in silence !

¹⁵ Let your writing now allege or declare all that is good and favourable to me.

loving spirit of the poetry of Chaucer's time, in which the influence of the Troubadours was still largely present. It is quite in keeping, also, with the principles that regulated the Courts, the purpose of which was more to discuss and determine the proper conduct of love affairs, than to secure conviction or acquittal, sanction or reprobation, in particular cases—though the jurisdiction and the judgments of such assemblies often closely concerned individuals. Chaucer introduces us to his main theme through the vestibule of a fancied dream—a method which he repeatedly employs with great relish, as for instance in "The House of Fame." He has spent the whole day over Cicero's account of the Dream of Scipio (Africanus the Younger); and, having gone to bed, he dreams that Africanus the Elder appears to him—just as in the book he appeared to his namesake—and carries him into a beautiful park, in which is a fair garden by a river-side. Here the poet is led into a splendid temple, through a crowd of courtiers allegorically representing the various instruments, pleasures, emotions, and encouragements of Love; and in the temple Venus herself is found, sporting with her porter Richess. Returning into the garden, he sees the Goddess of Nature seated on a hill of flowers; and before her are assembled all the birds—for it is Saint Valentine's Day, when every fowl chooses her mate. Having with a graphic touch enumerated and described the principal birds, the poet sees that on her hand Nature bears a female eagle of surpassing loveliness and virtue, for which three male eagles advance contending claims. The disputation lasts all day; and at evening the assembled birds, eager to be gone with their mates, clamour for a decision. The tercelet, the goose, the cuckoo, and the turtle—for birds of prey, water-fowl, worm-fowl, and seed-fowl respectively—pronounce their verdicts on the dispute, in speeches full of character and humour; but Nature refers the decision between the three claimants to the female eagle herself, who prays that she may have a year's respite. Nature grants the prayer, pronounces judgment accordingly, and dismisses the assembly; and after a chosen choir has sung a roundel in honour of the Goddess, all the birds fly away, and the poet awakes. It is probable that Chaucer derived the idea of the poem from a French source; Mr Bell gives the outline of a *fabliau*, of which three versions existed, and in which a contention between two ladies regarding the merits of their respective lovers, a knight and a clerk, is decided by Cupid in a Court composed of birds, which assume their sides according to their different natures. Whatever the source of the idea, its management, and the whole workmanship of the poem, especially in the more humorous passages, are essentially Chaucer's own.]

THE life so short, the craft so long to learn,
Th' assay so hard, so sharp the conquering,
The dreadful joy, alway that flits so yern;¹
All this mean I by² Love, that my feeling
Astoneth³ with his wonderful working,
So sore, y-wis, that, when I on him think,
Naught wit I well whether I fleet⁴ or sink,

For all be⁵ that I know not Love indeed,
Nor wot how that he quiteth folk their hire,⁶
Yet happeth me full oft in books to read
Of his miracles, and of his cruel ire;
There read I well, he will be lord and sire;
I dare not saye, that his strokes be sore;
But God save such a lord! I can no more.

Of usage, what for lust and what for lore,⁷
On bookes read I oft, as I you told.
But wherefore speak I allë this? Not yore
Agone, it happed me for to behold
Upon a book written with letters old;

¹ That fleets so fast.

² Of, with reference to.

⁴ Float, swim.

⁶ Rewards folk for their service.

⁷ What for liking and what for learning.

⁸ Eagerly.

¹⁰ A little while.

¹¹ "The Dream of Scipio"—"Somnium Scipionis"—occupies most of the sixth book of Cicero's "Republic;" which, indeed, as it has come down to us, is otherwise imperfect. Scipio Africanus Minor is represented as relating a dream which he had when, in B.C. 149, he went to Africa as military tribune to the fourth legion. He had talked long and earnestly of his adop-

³ Astounds, amazes.

⁵ Albeit, although.

And thereupon, a certain thing to learn,
The longë day full fast I read and yern.⁸

For out of the old fieldë, as men saith,
Cometh all this new corn, from year to year;
And out of oldë bookë, in good faith,
Cometh all this new science that men lear.⁹
But now to purpose as of this mattëre:
To readë forth it gan me so delight,
That all the day me thought it but a lite.¹⁰

This book, of which I makë mention,
Entitled was right thus, as I shall tell;
"Tullius, of the Dream of Scipion:"¹¹
Chapters seven it had, of heav'n, and hell,
And earth, and soulë that therein do dwell;
Of which, as shortly as I can it treat,
Of his sentence I will you say the great.¹²

First telleth it, when Scipio was come
To Africa, how he met Massinisse,
That him for joy in armës hath y-nome.¹³

tive grandfather with Massinissa, King of Numidia, the intimate friend of the great Scipio; and at night his illustrious ancestor appeared to him in a vision, foretold the overthrow of Carthage and all his other triumphs, exhorted him to virtue and patriotism by the assurance of rewards in the next world, and discoursed to him concerning the future state and the immortality of the soul. Macrobius, about A.D. 500, wrote a Commentary upon the "Somnium Scipionis," which was a favourite book in the Middle Ages. See note 7, page 168.

¹² The important part, the substance.

¹³ Taken; past participle of "nime," from Anglo-Saxon, "niman," to take.

Then telleth he their speech, and all the bliss
That was between them till the day gan miss.¹
And how his ancéstor Africane so dear
Can in his sleep that night to him appear.

Then telleth it, that from a starry place
How Africane hath him Carthage y-shew'd,
And warn'd him before of all his grace,²
And said him, what man, learned either lewd,³
That loveth common profit,⁴ well y-thew'd,⁵
He should unto a blissful placé wend,⁶
Where as the joy is without any end.

Then asked he,⁷ if folk that here be dead
Have life, and dwelling, in another place?
And Africane said, "Yea, withouté dread;"⁸
And how our present worldly livés' space
Meant but a manner death,⁹ what way we trace;
And rightful folk should go, after they die,
To Heav'n; and showed him the galaxy.

Then show'd he him the little earth that
here is,
To regard of¹⁰ the heaven's quantity;
And after show'd he him the niné spherés;¹¹
And after that the melody heard he,
That cometh of those spherés thrice three,
That wells of music be and melody
In this world here, and cause of harmony.

Then said he him, since earthé was so lite,¹²
And full of torment and of hardé grace,¹³
That he should not him in this world delight.
Then told he him, in certain yearés' space,
That ev'ry star should come into his place,
Where it was first; and all should out of mind,¹⁴
That in this world is done of all mankind.

Then pray'd him Scipio, to tell him all
The way to come into that Heaven's bliss;
And he said: "First know thyself immortal,
And look aye busily that thou work and wiss¹⁵
To common profit, and thou shalt not miss
To come swiftly unto that placé dear,
That full of bliss is, and of soulés clear.¹⁶

"And breakers of the law, the sooth to sayn,
And likerous folk, after that they be dead,
Shall whirl about the world always in pain,
Till many a world be passed, out of dread;
And then, forgiven all their wicked deed,
They shallé come unto that blissful place,
To which to comé God thee sendé grace!"

¹ Began to fall.

² Of the favour which the gods would show him, in delivering Carthage into his hands.

³ Ignorant, uncultured.

⁴ The public advantage.

⁵ Possessed of noble qualities, morally excellent.

⁶ Go.

⁷ The younger Scipio.

⁸ Doubt.

⁹ "Vestra vero, quæ dicitur, vita mors est."

¹⁰ By comparison with.

¹¹ The nine spheres are God, or the highest heaven, constraining and containing all the others; the Earth, around which the planets and the highest heaven revolve; and the seven planets: the revolution of all producing the "music of the spheres."

¹² Small.

¹³ Evil fortune.

¹⁴ Perish from memory.

¹⁵ Counsel, guide affairs.

¹⁶ Illustrious, noble; Latin, "clarus."

¹⁷ Taketh away.

¹⁸ Prepare myself.

¹⁹ Would not.

²⁰ Utterly wearied.

²¹ Dreamed.

²² Same garb or aspect.

²³ Time.

²⁴ Charioteer.

²⁵ Chariots.

²⁶ Foes.

²⁷ That he drinks wine, as one in health.

The day gan failen, and the darké night,
That reaveth¹⁷ beastés from their business,
Berefté me my book for lack of light,
And to my bed I gan me for to dress,¹⁸
Full fill'd of thought and busy heaviness;
For both I haddé thing which that I n'old,¹⁹
And eke I had not that thing that I wo'ld.

But, finally, my spirit at the last,
Forweary²⁰ of my labour all that day,
Took rest, that madé me to sleepé fast;
And in my sleep I mette,²¹ as that I say,
How Africane, right in the self array²²
That Scipio him saw before that tide,²³
Was come, and stood right at my beddés side.

The weary hunter, sleeping in his bed,
To wood against his mind goeth anon;
The judgé dreameth how his pleas be sped;
The carter²⁴ dreameth how his cartés²⁵ go'n;
The rich of gold, the knight fights with his fone;²⁶
The sické mette he drinketh of the tun;²⁷
The lover mette he hath his lady won.

I cannot say, if that the causé were,
For²⁸ I had read of Africane beforé,
That madé me to mette that he stood there;
But thus said he; "Thou hast thee so well borne
In looking of mine old book all to-torn,
Of which Macrobius raught not a lite,²⁹
That somedeal³⁰ of thy labour would I quite."³¹

Cytherea, thou blissful Lady sweet!
That with thy firebrand dauntest when thee lest,³²
That madest me this sweven³³ for to mette,
Be thou my help in this, for thou may'st best!
As wisely³⁴ as I saw the north-north-west,
When I began my sweven for to write,
So give me might to rhyme it and endite.

This foresaid Africane me hent³⁵ anon,
And forth with him unto a gaté brought
Right of a park, walled with greené stone;
And o'er the gate, with letters large y-wrought,
There weré verses written, as me thought,
On either half, of full great difference,
Of which I shall you say the plain sentéce.³⁶

"Through me men go into the blissful place³⁷
Of heartés heal and deadly woundés' cure;
Through me men go unto the well of grace;
Where green and lusty May shall ever dure;

²⁸ Because.

²⁹ Recked not a little; which he held in high esteem.

³⁰ Some part.

³¹ Recompense.

³² Conquerest at thine own pleasure.

³³ Dream.

³⁴ As surely; the significance of the poet's looking to the NNW. is not plain; his window may have faced that way.

³⁵ Took, caught.

³⁶ Meaning, sense.

³⁷ The idea of the twin gates, leading to the Paradise and the Hell of lovers, may have been taken from the description of the gates of dreams in the *Odyssey* and the *Æneid*; but the iteration of "Through me men go" far more directly suggests the legend on Dante's gate of Hell:—

"Per me si va nella città dolente,
Per me si va nell' eterno dolore;
Per me si va tra la perduta gente."

The famous line, "Lasciate ogni speranza, voi che entrate"—"All hope abandon, ye who enter here"—is evidently paraphrased in Chaucer's words "Th' eschewing is the only remedy;" that is, the sole hope consists in the avoidance of that dismal gate.

This is the way to all good aventure ;
Be glad, thou reader, and thy sorrow off cast ;
All open am I ; pass in and speed thee fast."

"Through me men go," thus spake the other
side,

"Unto the mortal strokēs of the spear,
Of which disdain and danger is the guide ;
There never tree shall fruit nor leavēs bear ;
This stream you leadeth to the sorrowful weir,
Where as the fish in prison is all dry ;¹
Th' eschewing is the only remedy."

These verses of gold and azure written were,
On which I gan astonish'd to behold ;
For with that one increased all my fear,
And with that other gan my heart to bold ;²
That one me het,³ that other did me cold ;
No wit had I, for error,⁴ for to choose
To enter or fly, or me to save or lose.

Right as betwixten adamantēs⁵ two
Of even weight, a piece of iron set,
Ne hath no might to movē to nor fro ;
For what the one may hale, the other let ;⁶
So far'd I, that n'ist whether me was bet⁷
T' enter or leave, till Africane, my guide,
Me hent⁸ and shov'd in at the gatēs wide.

And said, "It standeth written in thy face,
Thine error,⁴ though thou tell it not to me ;
But dread thou not to come into this place ;
For this writing is nothing meant by⁹ thee,
Nor by none, but¹⁰ he Lovē's servant be ;
For thou of Love hast lost thy taste, I guess,
As sick man hath of sweet and bitterness.

"But natheless, although that thou be dull,
That thou canst not do, yet thou mayest see ;
For many a man that may not stand a pull,
Yet likes it him at wrestling for to be,
And deemē¹¹ whether he doth bet,¹² or he ;
And, if thou haddest cunning¹³ to endite,
I shall thee showē matter of to write."¹⁴

With that my hand in his he took anon,
Of which I comfort caught,¹⁵ and went in fast.
But, Lord ! so I was glad and well-begone !¹⁶
For over all,¹⁷ where I mine eyen cast,
Were trees y-clad with leaves that ay shall last,
Each in his kind, with colour fressh and green
As emerald, that joy it was to see'n.

¹ A powerful though homely description of torment ;
the sufferers being represented as fish enclosed in a
weir from which all the water has been withdrawn.

² Grow bold, take courage.

³ Heated.

⁴ Perplexity, confusion.

⁵ Magnets.

⁶ Whatever force the one exerts to draw, the other
puts forth an equal force to restrain.

⁷ Wist not, knew not, whether it was better for me.

⁸ Took, caught.

⁹ Has no reference to.

¹⁰ Unless.

¹¹ Judge.

¹² Better.

¹³ Skill.

¹⁴ Of which to write.

¹⁵ Conceived, took.

¹⁶ Fortunate, glad.

¹⁷ Everywhere.

¹⁸ Compare with this catalogue raisonné of trees the
ampler list given by Spenser in "The Faerie Queen,"
book i. canto i. (page 311). In several instances, as
in "the builder oak" and "the sailing pine," the later
poet has exactly copied the words of the earlier. In the
Middle Ages the oak was as distinctively the building
timber on land, as it subsequently became for the sea.

¹⁹ Spenser explains this in paraphrasing it into "the
vineprop elm"—because it was planted as a pillar or

The builder oak ;¹⁸ and eke the hardy ash ;
The pillar elm,¹⁹ the coffer unto carrain ;
The box, pipe tree ;²⁰ the holm to whippē's lash ;²¹
The sailing fir ;²² the cypress death to plain ;²³
The shooter yew ;²⁴ the aspe for shaftēs plain ;²⁵
Th' olive of peace, and eke the drunken vine ;
The victor palm ; the laurel, too, divine.²⁶

A garden saw I, full of blossom'd boughēs,
Upon a river, in a greenē mead,
Where as sweetness evermore enow is,
With flowers whitē, blue, yellow, and red,
And coldē wellē²⁷ streamēs, nothing dead,
That swammē full of smallē fishes light,
With finnēs red, and scalēs silver bright.

On ev'ry bough the birdēs heard I sing,
With voice of angels in their harmony,
That busied them their birdēs forth to bring ;
The pretty conies to their play gan hie ;²⁸
And further all about I gan espy
The dreadful²⁹ roe, the buck, the hart, and
hind,
Squirrels, and beastēs small, of gentle kind.³⁰

Of instruments of stringēs in accord
Heard I so play a ravishing sweetnēs,
That God, that Maker is of all and Lord,
Ne heardē never better, as I guess :
Therewith a wind, unneth³¹ it might be less,
Made in the leavēs green a noisē soft,
Accordant to³² the fowlēs' song on loft.

Th' air of the placē so attemper³³ was,
That ne'er was there grievānce³⁴ of hot nor
cold ;
There was eke ev'ry wholesome spice and grass,
Nor no man may there waxē sick nor old :
Yet³⁵ was there morē joy a thousand fold
Than I can tell, or ever could or might ;
There ever is clear day, and never night.

Under a tree, beside a well, I sey³⁶
Cupid our lord his arrows forge and file ;³⁷
And at his feet his bow all ready lay ;
And well his daughter temper'd, all the while,
The headēs in the well ; and with her wile
She couch'd³⁸ them after, as they shouldē serve
Some for to slay, and some to wound and kerve.³⁹

Then was I ware of Pleasance anon right,

prop to the vine ; it is called "the coffer unto carrain,"
or "carrion," because coffins for the dead were made
from it.

²⁰ The box, tree used for making pipes or horns.

²¹ The holly, used for whip-handles.

²² Because ships' masts and spars were made of its
wood.

²³ In Spenser's imitation, "the cypress funeral."

²⁴ Used for bows.

²⁵ Of the aspen, or black poplar, arrows were made.

²⁶ So called, either because it was Apollo's tree—
Horace says that Pindar is "laureā donandus Apolli-
nari"—or because the honour which it signified, when
placed on the head of a poet or conqueror, lifted a man
as it were into the rank of the gods.

²⁷ Fountain.

²⁸ Haste.

²⁹ Timid.

³⁰ Nature.

³¹ Scarcely.

³² In keeping with.

³³ Temperate, mild.

³⁴ Annoyance, hurt.

³⁵ Moreover.

³⁶ Saw.

³⁷ Polish.

³⁸ She cunningly arranged them in order.

³⁹ Carve, cut.

And of Array, Lust, Beauty,¹ and Courtesy,
And of the Craft, that can and hath the might
To do² by force a wight to do folly;
Disfigured³ was she, I will not lie;
And by himself, under an oak, I guess,
Saw I Delight, that stood with Gentleness.

Then saw I Beauty,¹ with a nice attire,
And Youth⁴, full of game and jollity,
Foolhardiness, Flattery, and Desire,
Messagerie, and Meed, and other three;⁵
Their names shall not here be told for me:
And upon pillars great of jasper long
I saw a temple of brass y-founded strong.

And [all] about the temple danc'd alway
Women enough, of which⁶ some there were
Fair of themselves, and some of them were gay;
In kirtles all dishevell'd⁴ went they there;
That was their office⁵ ever, from year to year;
And on the temple saw I, white and fair,
Of doves sitting many a thousand pair.⁶

Before the temple door, full soberly,
Dame Peac⁶ sat, a curtain in her hand;
And her beside, wonder discreetly,
Dame Patienc⁶ sitting there I fand,
With face pale, upon a hill of sand;
And althernext, within and eke without,
Behest,⁷ and Art, and of their folk a rout.⁸

Within the temple, of sighs hot as fire
I heard a swough,⁹ that gan about¹⁰ ren,¹⁰
Which sighs were engender'd with desire,
That made every heart¹¹ for to bren¹¹
Of new¹² flame; and well espied I then,
That all the cause of sorrows that they dree¹²
Came of the bitter goddess Jealousy.

The God Priapus¹³ saw I, as I went
Within the temple, in sov'reign place stand,

Beauty is twice included in this list of Love's courtiers; in a similar list given in the description of Venus' temple (The Knight's Tale, page 35), Beauty is mentioned in the same line with Youth; and, if we retain the same association in the present passage, "Hope" may be read for the first "Beauty," with advantage to the metre and to the completeness of the list. If Chaucer had any special trio of courtiers in his mind when he excluded so many names, we may suppose them to be Charms, Sorcery, and Leasings, who, in The Knight's Tale, come after Bawdry and Riches—to whom Messagerie (the carrying of messages) and Meed (reward, bribe) may correspond.

² Make, cause. ³ Deformed, or disguised.

⁴ In tunics, robes, all disordered.

⁵ (To dance there) was their duty or occupation.

⁶ The dove was the bird sacred to Venus; hence Ovid enumerates the peacock of Juno, Jove's armour-bearing bird, "Oythereiadisque columbas" ("Metam." xv. 286).

⁷ Promise. ⁸ Crowd.

⁹ Confused murmuring noise. ¹⁰ Run.

¹¹ Burn.

¹² Endure, suffer.

¹³ Fitly endowed with a place in the Temple of Love, as being the embodiment of the principle of fertility in flocks and the fruits of the earth. See note 18, page 111.

¹⁴ Ovid, in the "Fasti" (l. 433), describes the confusion of Priapus when, in the night following a feast of sylvan and Bacchic deities, the braying of the ass of Silenus awakened the company to detect the god in a furtive amatory expedition.

¹⁵ Endeavour.

¹⁶ Haughty, lofty; French, "hautain."

¹⁷ Scarcely.

¹⁸ To set, decline towards the west.

¹⁹ Not tied in a knot, loose.

²⁰ Well to my content; from French, "payer," to pay, satisfy; the same word often occurs, in the phrases "well paid," and "evil paid."

In such array, as when the ass him shent¹⁴
With cry by night, and with sceptre in hand:
Full busily men gan assay and fand¹⁵
Upon his head to set, of sundry hue,
Garlandes full of fresh¹⁶ flowers new.

And in a privy corner, in disport,
Found I Venus and her porter Rich¹⁷ess,
That was full noble and hautain¹⁸ of her port;
Dark was that place, but afterward lightness
I saw a little, unne¹⁷th it might be less;
And on a bed of gold she lay to rest,
Till that the hot¹⁸ sun began to west.¹⁸

Her gilded hair¹⁹s with a golden thread
Y-bounden were, untressed,¹⁹ as she lay;
And naked from the breast unto the head
Men might her see; and, soothly for to say,
The remnant cover'd, well²⁰ to my pay,²⁰
Right with a little kerchief of Valence;²¹
There was no thicker cloth²¹ of defence.

The place gave a thousand savours sweet;²²
And Bacchus, god of wine, sat her beside;
And Ceres next, that doth of hunger boot;²³
And, as I said, amidd²⁴es²⁴ lay Cypride,²⁵
To whom on knees the young²⁶ folk²⁶ cried
To be their help: but thus I let her lie,²⁶
And farther in the temple gan espy,

That, in despite of Dian²⁷ the chaste,
Full many a bow²⁸ broke hung on the wall,
Of maidens, such as go their time to waste
In her service: and painted over all
Of many a story, of which I touch²⁹ shall
A few, as of Calist²⁹, and Atalant²⁹,²⁷
And many a maid, of which the name I want.

Semiramis,³⁰ Canace,³⁰ and Hercules,³⁰
Biblis,³¹ Did³¹6, Thisbe and Pyramus,³²
Tristram, Isoude,³³ Paris, and Achill³⁴es,³⁴

²¹ Valentia, in Spain, was famed for the fabrication of fine and transparent stuffs.

²² Sweet.

²³ Affords the remedy for, relieves, hunger; the obvious reference is to the proverbial "Sine Cerere et Libero friget Venus," quoted in Terence, "Eunuchus," act iv. scene v.

²⁴ In the midst.

²⁵ Venus; called "Cypria," or "Cypris," from the island of Cyprus, in which her worship was especially celebrated.

²⁶ Left her lying.

²⁷ For their stories, see note 9, page 37; and note 1, page 387.

²⁸ Queen of Ninus, the mythical founder of Babylon; Ovid mentions her, along with Lais, as a type of voluptuousness, in his "Amores," l. 5, 11.

²⁹ Canace, daughter of Æolus, is named in the prologue to The Man of Law's Tale (page 61) as one of the ladies whose "cursed stories" Chaucer refrained from writing. She loved her brother Macareus, and was slain by her father.

³⁰ Who was conquered by his love for Omphale, and spun wool for her in a woman's dress, while she wore his lion's skin.

³¹ Who vainly pursued her brother Caunus with her love, till she was changed to a fountain; Ovid, "Metam." lib. ix.

³² The Babylonian lovers, whose death, through the error of Pyramus in fancying that a lion had slain his mistress, forms the theme of the interlude in the "Midsummer Night's Dream."

³³ Sir Tristram was one of the most famous among the knights of King Arthur, and La Belle Isoude was his mistress. Their story is mixed up with the Arthurian romance; but it was also the subject of separate treatment, being among the most popular of the Middle Age legends.

³⁴ Achilles is reckoned among Love's conquests, because, according to some traditions, he loved Polyxena, the daughter of Priam, who was promised to him if he

Heléna, Cleopatra, Troilus,
Scylla,¹ and eke the mother of Romulus;²
All these were painted on the other side,
And all their love, and in what plight they died.

When I was come again into the place
That I of spake, that was so sweet and green,
Forth walk'd I then, myselfe to solace:
Then was I waré where there sat a queen,
That, as of light the summer Sunné sheen
Passeth the star, right so over mesure³
She fairer was than any créature.

And in a lawn, upon a hill of flowers,
Was set this noble goddess of Nature;
Of branches were her hallés and her bowers
Y-wrought, after her craft and her mesure;
Nor was there fowl that comes of engendrure
That there ne weré prest,⁴ in her preséce,
To take her doom,⁵ and give her audience.

For this was on Saint Valentiné's Day,
When ev'ry fowl cometh to choose her make,⁶
Of every kind that men thinken may;
And then so huge a noisè gan they make,
That earth, and sea, and tree, and ev'ry lake,
So full was, that unnethés⁷ there was space
For me to stand, so full was all the place.

And right as Alain, in his Plaint of Kind,⁸
Deviseth⁹ Nature of such array and face;
In such array men mighté her there find.
This noble Emperess, full of all grace,
Bade ev'ry fowlé take her owen place,
As they were wont alway, from year to year,
On Saint Valéntine's Day to standé there.

That is to say, the fowlés of ravine¹⁰
Were highest set, and then the fowlés smale,
That eaten as them Nature would incline;
As wormé-fowl, of which I tell no tale;

consented to join the Trojans; and, going without arms
into Apollo's temple at Thymbra, he was there slain by
Paris.

¹ Love-stories are told of two maidens of this name;
one the daughter of Nisus, King of Megara, who, falling
in love with Minos when he besieged the city, slew
her father by pulling out the golden hair which grew
on the top of his head, and on which his life and king-
dom depended. Minos won the city, but rejected her
love in horror. The other Scylla, from whom the rock
opposite to Charybdis was named, was a beautiful
maiden, beloved by the sea-god Glaucus, but changed
into a monster through the jealousy and enchant-
ments of Circe.

² Silvia, daughter and only living child of Numitor,
whom her uncle Amulius made a vestal virgin, to pre-
clude the possibility that his brother's descendants
could wrest from him the kingdom of Alba Longa.
But the maiden was violated by Mars as she went to
bring water from a fountain; she bore Romulus and
Remus; and she was drowned in the Anio, while the
cradle with the children was carried down the stream
in safety to the Palatine Hill, where the she-wolf
adopted them.

³ Out of all proportion.

⁴ Were not ready; French, "prêt."

⁵ To receive her judgment or decision.

⁶ Mate, companion.

⁷ Scarcely.

⁸ Alanus de Insulis, a Sicilian poet and orator of the
twelfth century, who wrote a book "De Planctu Na-
ture"—"The Complaint of Nature."

⁹ Describeth.

¹⁰ The birds of prey.

¹¹ Which scholars well can describe.

¹² Causeth pain or woe.

¹³ Grasps, compresses; the falcon was borne on the
hand by the highest personages, not merely in actual
sport, but to be caressed and petted, even on occasions
of ceremony. Hence also it is called the "gentle"

But waterfowl sat lowest in the dale,
And fowls that live by seed sat on the green,
And that so many, that wonder was to see'n.

There mighté men the royal eagle find,
That with his sharpé look pierceth the Sun;
And other eagles of a lower kind,
Of which that clerkés well devisé con;¹¹
There was the tyrant with his feathers dun
And green, I mean the goshawk, that doth
pine¹²

To birds, for his outrageous ravine.

The gentle falcon, that with his feet dis-
traineth¹³

The kingé's hand; the hardy sperhawk¹⁴ eke,
The quailé's foe; the merlion¹⁵ that paineth
Himself full oft the larké for to seek;
There was the dové, with her eyen meek;
The jealous swan, against¹⁶ his death that singeth;
The owl eke, that of death the bodé¹⁷ bringeth.

The crane, the giant, with his trumpet soun';
The thief the chough; and eke the chatt'ring pie;
The scorning jay;¹⁸ the eel's foe the heroún;
The falsé lapwing, full of treachery;¹⁹
The starling, that the counsel can betray;
The tamé ruddock,²⁰ and the coward kite;
The cock, that horologe is of thorpés lite.²¹

The sparrow, Venus' son;²² the nightingale,
That calleth forth the freshé leavés new;²³
The swallow, murd'rer of the bees smale,
That honey make of flowers fresh of hue;
The wedded turtle, with his hearté true;
The peacock, with his angel feathers bright;²⁴
The pheasant, scorner of the cock by night;²⁵

The waker goose;²⁶ the cuckoo ever unkind;²⁷
The popinjay, full of delicacy;²⁸

falcon—as if its high birth and breeding gave it a right
to august society.

¹⁴ The bold, pert, sparrow-hawk.

¹⁵ Elsewhere in the same poem called "emerlon;"
French, "emerillon;" the merlin, a small hawk carried
by ladies.

¹⁶ Before, in anticipation of.

¹⁷ Message, omen.

¹⁸ Scorning humbler birds, out of pride of his fine
plumage.

¹⁹ Full of stratagems and pretences to divert approach-
ing danger from the nest where her young ones are.

²⁰ Robin-redbreast.

²¹ That is the clock of the little hamlets or villages.

²² Because sacred to Venus.

²³ Coming with the spring, the nightingale is charm-
ingly said to call forth the new leaves.

²⁴ Many-coloured wings, like those of peacocks, were
often given to angels in paintings of the Middle Ages;
and in accordance with this fashion Spenser represents
the Angel that guarded Sir Guyon ("Faerie Queen,"
book ii. canto vii. page 388) as having wings "decked
with diverse plumes, like painted jays."

²⁵ The meaning of this passage is not very plain; it
has been supposed, however, to refer to the frequent
breeding of pheasants at night with domestic poultry
in the farmyard—thus scorning the sway of the cock,
its rightful monarch.

²⁶ Chaucer evidently alludes to the passage in Ovid
describing the crow of Apollo, which rivalled the spot-
less doves, "Nec servaturis vigili Capitolia voce Ce-
deret anseribus"—"nor would it yield (in whiteness)
to the geese destined with wakeful or vigilant voice to
save the Capitol" ("Metam.," ii. 538) when about to
be surprised by the Gauls in a night attack.

²⁷ The significance of this epithet is amply explained
by the poem of "The Cuckoo and the Nightingale."

²⁸ The parrot full of pleasingness.

The drake, destroyer of his own kind;¹
 The stork, the wrecker of adultery;²
 The hot cormorant, full of gluttony;³
 The raven and the crow, with voice of care;⁴
 The throstle old;⁵ and the frosty fieldfare.⁶

What should I say? Of fowls of ev'ry kind
 That in this world have feathers and stature,
 Men mighten in that place assembled find,
 Before that noble goddess of Nature;
 And each of them did all his busy cure⁷
 Benignly to choose, or for to take,
 By her accord,⁸ his formel or his make.⁹

But to the point. Nature held on her hand
 A formel eagle, of shape the gentlest
 That ever she among her workes fand,
 The most benign, and eke the goodliest;
 In her was ev'ry virtue at its rest,¹⁰
 So farforth that Nature herself had bliss
 To look on her, and oft her beak to kiss.

Nature, the vicar of th' Almighty Lord,—
 That hot, cold, heavy, light, and moist, and dry,
 Hath knit, by even number of accord,—
 In easy voice began to speak, and say:
 "Fowlës, take heed of my sentence,¹¹ I pray;
 And for your ease, in furth'ring of your need,
 As far as I may speak, I will me speed.

"Ye know well how, on Saint Valéntine's Day,
 By my statute, and through my governance,
 Ye choose your mates, and after fly away
 With them, as I you prickë with pleasance;¹²
 But nathless, as by rightful ordinance,
 May I not let,¹³ for all this world to win,
 But he that most is worthy shall begin.

"The tercel eagle, as ye know full weal,¹⁴
 The fowl royál, above you all in degree,
 The wise and worthy, secret, true as steel,
 The which I formed have, as ye may see,
 In ev'ry part, as it best liketh me,—
 It needeth not his shape you to devise,¹⁵—
 He shall first choose, and spoken in his guise.¹⁶

"And, after him, by order shall ye choose,
 After your kind, evereach as you liketh;

¹ Of the ducklings—which, if not prevented, he will kill wholesale.

² The stork is conspicuous for faithfulness to all family obligations, devotion to its young, and care of its parent birds in their old age. Mr Bell quotes from Bishop Stanley's "History of Birds" a little story which peculiarly justifies the special character Chaucer has given:—"A French surgeon, at Smyrna, wishing to procure a stork, and finding great difficulty, on account of the extreme veneration in which they are held by the Turks, stole all the eggs out of a nest, and replaced them with those of a hen: in process of time the young chickens came forth, much to the astonishment of Mr and Mrs Stork. In a short time Mr S. went off, and was not seen for two or three days, when he returned with an immense crowd of his companions, who all assembled in the place, and formed a circle, taking no notice of the numerous spectators whom so unusual an occurrence had collected. Mrs Stork was brought forward into the midst of the circle, and, after some consultation, the whole flock fell upon her and tore her to pieces; after which they immediately dispersed, and the nest was entirely abandoned."

³ The cormorant feeds upon fish, so voraciously, that when the stomach is crammed it will often have the gullet and bill likewise full, awaiting the digestion of the rest.

⁴ So called from the evil omens supposed to be afforded by their harsh cries.

And as your hap¹⁷ is, shall ye win or lose;
 But which of you that lovë most entriketh,¹⁸
 God send him her that sorest for him siketh."¹⁹
 And therewithal the tercel gan she call,
 And said, "My son, the choice is to thee fall.

"But nathless, in this condition
 Must be the choice of ev'reach that is here,
 That she agree to his election,
 Whoso he be, that shouldë be her fere;²⁰
 This is our usage ay, from year to year;
 And whoso may at this time have this grace,
 In blissful time²¹ he came into this place."

With head inclin'd, and with full humble
 cheer,²²

This royal tercel spake, and tarried not:
 "Unto my sov'reign lady, and not my fere,²³
 I chose and choose, with will, and heart, and
 thought,

The formel on your hand, so well y-wrought,
 Whose I am all, and ever will her serve,
 Do what her list, to do me live or sterve.²⁴

"Beseeching her of mercy and of grace,
 As she that is my lady sovereign,
 Or let me die here present in this place,
 For certes long may I not live in pain;
 For in my heart is carven ev'ry vein:²⁵
 Having regard only unto my truth,
 My dearë heart, have on my woe some ruth.²⁶

"And if that I be found to her untrue,
 Disobeisant,²⁷ or wilful negligent,
 Avaunter, or in process love a new,²⁸
 I pray to you, this be my judgëment,
 That with these fowlës I be all to-rent,²⁹
 That ilkë³⁰ day that she me ever find
 To her untrue, or in my guilt unkind.

"And since none loveth her so well as I,
 Although she never of love me behet,³¹
 Then ought she to be mine, through her mercy;
 For other bond can I none on her knit;³²
 For weal or for woe, never shall I let³³
 To servë her, how far so that she wend;³⁴
 Say what you list, my tale is at an end."

⁵ Long-lived.

⁶ Which visits this country only in hard wintry weather.

⁷ Care, pains.

⁸ Consent.

⁹ Female or mate; "formel," strictly or originally applied to the female of the eagle and hawk, is here used generally of the female of all birds; "tercel" is the corresponding word applied to the male.

¹⁰ At its highest point of excellence—so that it rested, unable to proceed farther.

¹¹ Opinion, discourse.

¹² Inspire you with pleasure.

¹³ Hinder.

¹⁴ Well.

¹⁵ Describe.

¹⁶ In his own way.

¹⁷ Fortune.

¹⁸ Entangles, ensnares; French, "intriguer," to perplex; hence "intricate."

¹⁹ Sigheth.

²⁰ Companion, mate.

²¹ In a happy hour.

²² Demeanour.

²³ Not my mate merely, but my queen.

²⁴ Let her do what she will, to make me live or die.

²⁵ Every vein in my heart is wounded with love.

²⁶ Compassion.

²⁷ Disobedient.

²⁸ (If I should be found) a bragger (of her favours) or in process (of time) should love a new (lady).

²⁹ Rent in pieces.

³⁰ Very, self-same.

³¹ Made me promise of love.

³² For I can bind her by no other obligation.

³³ Cease, fail.

³⁴ Go.

Right as the freshē reddē rosē new
Against the summer Sunnē colour'd is,
Right so, for shame, all waxen gan the hue
Of this formel, when she had heard all this;
Neither she answer'd well, nor said amiss,¹
So sore abashed was she, till Natūre
Said, "Daughter, dread you not, I you
assure."²

Another tercel eagle spake anon,
Of lower kind, and said that should not be;
"I love her better than ye do, by Saint John!
Or at the least I love her as well as ye,
And longer have her serv'd in my degree;
And if she should have lov'd for long loving,
To me alone had been the guerdoning."³

"I dare eke say, if she me findē false,
Unkind, janglere,⁴ rebel in any wise,
Or jealous, do me hangē by the halse;⁵
And but⁶ I bearē me in her service
As well ay as my wit can me suffice,
From point to point, her honour for to save,
Take she my life and all the good I have."

A thirdē tercel eagle answer'd tho:⁷
"Now, Sirs, ye see the little leisure here;
For ev'ry fowl cries out to be ago
Forth with his mate, or with his lady dear;
And eke Natūre herselfē will not hear,
For tarrying her, not half that I would say;
And but⁸ I speak, I must for sorrow day."⁹

"Of long service avaunt I me no thing,
But as possible is me to die to-day,
For woe, as he that hath been languishing
This twenty winter; and well happen may
A man may serve better, and more to pay,⁹
In half a year, although it were no more,
Than some man doth that served hath full yore."¹⁰

"I say not this by me, for that I can
Do no service that may my lady please;
But I dare say, I am her truest man,¹¹
As to my doom,¹² and faintest¹³ would her please;
At shortē words,¹⁴ until that death me seise,
I will be hers, whether I wake or wink,
And true in all that heartē may bethink."

Of all my life, since that day I was born,
So gentle plea,¹⁵ in love or other thing,
Ne heardē never no man me beforē;
Whoso that haddē leisure and cunning¹⁶
For to rehearse their cheer and their speaking:
And from the morrow gan these speeches last,
Till downward went the Sunnē wonder fast.

The noise of fowlēs for to be deliver'd¹⁷
So loudē rang, "Have done and let us wend,"¹⁸
That well ween'd I the wood had all to-shiver'd:

1 She answered nothing, either well or ill.
2 Confirm, support. 3 Reward.
4 A vain or boastful talker.
5 Make me be hanged by the neck.
6 Unless. 7 Then. 8 Die.
9 Satisfaction. See note 20, page 219.
10 For a long time.
11 Liegeman, servant, to do her homage.
12 Judgment. 13 Most gladly of all.
14 In one word. 15 Excellent, noble pleading.
16 Skill, ability. 17 Set free to depart.
18 Go. 19 Ruin. 20 Proof.
21 All this is worthless, useless.

"Come off!" they cried; "alas! ye will us
shend!"¹⁹

When will your cursed pleading have an end?
How should a judge either party believe,
For yea or nay, withouten any prove?"²⁰

The goose, the duck, and the cuckoo also,
So criēd "keke, keke," "cuckoo," "queke
queke," high,

That through mine ears the noisē wentē tho.²¹
The goose said then, "All this n'is worth a fly!"²²
But I can shape²³ hereof a remedy;
And I will say my verdict, fair and swith,²⁴
For water-fowl, whose be wroth or blith."²⁵

"And I for worm-fowl," said the fool cuckow;
"For I will, of mine own authority,
For common speed,²⁶ take on me the charge now;
For to deliver us is great charity."

"Ye may abide a whilē yet, pardie,"²⁷
Quoth then the turtle; "if it be your will
A wight may speak, it were as good be still.

"I am a seed-fowl, one th' unworthiest,
That know I well, and the least of cunning;
But better is, that a wight's tonguē rest,
Than entremettē him of²⁸ such doing
Of which he neither redē²⁹ can nor sing;
And who it doth, full foul himself accloyeth,³⁰
For office uncommanded³¹ oft annoyeth."

Natūrē, which that alway had an ear
To murmur of the lewēdness behind,
With facond³² voice said, "Hold your-tonguēs
there,

And I shall soon, I hope, a counsel find,
You to deliver, and from this noise unbind;
I charge of ev'ry flock³³ ye shall one call,
To say the verdict of you fowlēs all."

The tercēlet³⁴ said then in this mannere:
"Full hard it were to prove it by reason,
Who loveth best this gentle formel here;
For ev'reach hath such replicatiō,³⁵
That by skillēs may none be brought adown;³⁶
I cannot see that arguments avail;
Then seemeth it that there must be battāile."³⁷

"All ready!" quoth those eagle tercelles tho;³⁸
"Nay, Sirs!" quoth he; "if that I durst it say,
Ye do me wrong, my tale is not y-do,³⁹
For, Sirs,—and take it not agrief,⁴⁰ I pray,—
It may not be as ye would, in this way:
Ours is the voice that have the charge in hand,
And to the judges' doom ye mustē stand."⁴¹

"And therefore 'Peace!' I say; as to my wit,
Me wouldē think, how that the worthiest
Of knighthood, and had⁴² longest used it,
Most of estate, of blood the gentilest,

22 Devise. 23 Speedily.
24 Content, glad. 25 Despatch; advantage.
26 Truly; by God.
27 Meddle with; French, "entremettre," to interfere.
28 Counsel. 29 Embarrasseth.
30 Officious performance of uncommanded service.
31 Eloquent, fluent. 32 Class of fowl.
33 Male hawk. 34 Reply.
35 By arguments may none be overcome.
36 That the tercelles must fight for the formel.
37 Done. 38 Be not offended.
39 Ye must abide by the judges' decision.
40 (The one that) had.

Were fitting most for her, if that her lest;¹
And of these three she knows herself, I trow,²
Which that he be; for it is light³ to know."

The water-fowlës have their headës laid
Together, and of short advisëment,⁴
When evereach his verdict had y-said
They saidë soothly all by one assent,
How that "The goosë with the facond gent,⁵
That so desired to pronounce our need,⁶
Shall tell our tale;" and prayed God her speed.

And for those water-fowlës then began
The goose to speak, and in her cackëling
She saidë, "Peace, now! take keep ev'ry man,
And hearken what reason I shall forth bring;
My wit is sharp, I love no tarrying;
I say I rede him, though he were my brother,
But⁷ she will love him, let him love another!"

"Lo! here a perfect reason of a goose!"
Quoth the sperhawkë.⁸ "Never may she thé!⁹
Lo! such a thing 'tis t' have a tonguë loose!
Now, pardie! fool, yet were it bet¹⁰ for thee
Have held thy peace, than show'd thy nicety;¹¹
It lies not in his wit, nor in his will,
But sooth is said, a fool cannot be still."

The laughter rose of gentle fowlës all;
And right anon the seed-fowls chosen had
The turtle true, and gan her to them call,
And prayed her to say the soothë sad¹²
Of this mattëre, and asked what she rad;¹³
And she answer'd, that plainly her intent
She wouldë show, and soothly what she meant.

"Nay! God forbid a lover shouldë change!"
The turtle said, and wax'd for shame all red:
"Though that his lady evermore be strange,¹⁴
Yet let him serve her ay, till he be dead;
For, sooth, I praisë not the goose's rede;¹⁵
For, though she died, I would none other
make;¹⁶
I will be hers till that the death me take."

"Well bourded!"¹⁷ quoth the duckë, "by
my hat!
That men should loven alway causëless,
Who can a reason find, or wit, in that?
Danceth he merry, that is mirthëless?
Who shouldë reck of that is reckëless?¹⁸
Yea! quake yet," quoth the duck, "full well
and fair!
There be more starërë, God wot, than a pair!"¹⁹

"Now fy, churl!" quoth the gentle tercëlet,
"Out of the dunghill came that word aright;
Thou canst not see which thing is well beest;
Thou far'st by love, as owlës do by light,—
The day them blinds, full well they see by night;
Thy kind is of so low a wretchedness,
That what love is, thou canst not see nor guem."

Then gan the cuckoo put him forth in preas,²⁰
For fowl that eateth worm, and said belive:²¹
"So I," quoth he, "may have my mate in peace,
I reckë not how longë that they strive.
Let each of them be solain²² all their life;
This is my rede,¹⁵ since they may not accord;
This shortë lesson needeth not recórd."

"Yea, have the glutton fill'd enough his
paunch,
Then are we well!" saidë the emerlon;²³
"Thou murd'rer of the heggugg,²⁴ on the branch
That brought thee forth, thou most rueful
glutton,
Live thou solain,²⁵ wormë's corruption!
For no force is to lack of thy nature;²⁶
Go! lewëd be thou, while the world may dure!"

"Now peace," quoth Nature, "I commandë
here;
For I have heard all your opiniön,
And in effect yet be we ne'er the nere.²⁷
But, finally, this is my conclusiön,—
That she herself shall have her electiön
Of whom her list,²⁸ whoso be wroth or blith;²⁹
Him that she chooseth, he shall her have as
swith.³⁰

"For since it may not here discussed be
Who loves her best, as said the tercëlet,
Then will I do this favour t' her, that she
Shall have right him on whom her heart is set,
And he her, that his heart hath on her knit:
This judge I, Nature, for³¹ I may not lie
To none estate; I have none other eye.³²

"But as for counsel for to choose a make,
If I were Reason, [certes] then would I
Counsailë you the royal tercel take,
As saith the tercëlet full skilfully,³³
As for the gentilest, and most worthy,
Which I have wrought so well to my pleasance,
That to you it ought be a suffisance."³⁴

With dreadful³⁵ voice the formel her an-
swer'd:

its eggs in the nests of other and smaller birds, such as the hedge-sparrow ("heggugg"); and its young, when hatched, throw the eggs or nestlings of the true parent bird out of the nest, thus engrossing the mother's entire care. The crime on which the emerlon comments so sharply, is explained by the migratory habits of the cuckoo, which prevent its bringing up its own young; and nature has provided facilities for the crime, by furnishing the young bird with a peculiarly strong and broad back, indented by a hollow in which the sparrow's egg is lifted till it is thrown out of the nest.

²⁵ The loss of a bird of your depraved nature is no matter of regret.

²⁶ Nearer.

²⁷ She pleases.

²⁸ Adverse or willing; angry or glad.

²⁹ Immediately.

³⁰ Because.

³¹ I can see the matter in no other light.

³² Reasonably.

³³ It should satisfy you (to have him for your mate.)

³⁴ Full of dread, timid.

¹ If she pleased.

² Believe, am sure.

³ Easy.

⁴ After brief deliberation.

⁵ Refined, flowing eloquence; Latin, "facundia."

⁶ Pronounce upon our business.

⁷ Unless.

⁸ Sparrowhawk.

⁹ Thrive.

¹⁰ Better.

¹¹ Foolishness.

¹² The serious truth.

¹³ From "rede;" counselled.

¹⁴ Disdainful, uncomplying.

¹⁵ Counsel, opinion.

¹⁶ Mate.

¹⁷ A pretty joke!

¹⁸ Who should care for one that has no care for him.

¹⁹ The duck exhorts the contending lovers to be of light heart and sing, for abundance of other ladies were at their command.

²⁰ In the crowd.

²¹ Quickly.

²² Single, alone; the same word originally as "sullen."

²³ See note 15, page 220.

²⁴ The cuckoo is distinguished by its habit of laying

"My rightful lady, goddess of Nature,
Sooth is, that I am ever under your yerd,¹
As is every other creature,
And must be yours, while that my life may
dure ;

And therefore grantē me my firstē boon,²
And mine intent you will I say right soon."

"I grant it you," said she ; and right anon
This formel eagle spake in this degree :³

"Almighty queen, until this year be done
I askē respite to advisē me ;
And after that to have my choise all free ;
This is all and some that I would speak and say ;
Ye get no more, although ye do me dey.⁴

"I will not servē Venus, nor Cupide,
For sooth as yet, by no manner [of] way."
"Now since it may none other ways betide,"⁵
Quoth Dame Nature, "there is no more to say ;
Then would I that these fowlēs were away,
Each with his mate, for longer tarrying here."
And said them thus, as ye shall after hear.

"To you speak I, ye tercela," quoth Nature ;
"Be of good heart, and serve her allē three ;
A year is not so longē to endure ;
And each of you pain him⁶ in his degree
For to do well, for, God wot, quit is she
From you this year, what after so befall ;⁷
This entremess is dressed⁸ for you all."

And when this work y-brought was to an end,
To ev'ry fowlē Nature gave his make,
By even accord,⁹ and on their way they wend :¹⁰

And, Lord ! the bliss and joyē that they make !
For each of them gan other in his wings take,
And with their neckēs each gan other wind,¹¹
Thanking alway the noble goddess of Kind.

But first were chosen fowlēs for to sing,—
As year by year was alway their usānce,¹²—
To sing a roundel at their departing,
To do to Nature honour and pleasānce ;
The note, I trowē, maked was in France ;
The wordēs were such as ye may here find
The nextē verse, as I have now in mind :

*Qui bien aime, tard oublie.*¹³

"Now welcome summer, with thy sunnēs soft,
That hast these winter weathers overshake ;¹⁴
Saint Valentine, thou art full high on loft,
Which driv'st away the longē nightēs blake ;¹⁵
Thus singē smallē fowlēs for thy sake :
Well have they causē for to gladden¹⁶ oft,
Since each of them recover'd hath his make ;¹⁷
Full blissful may they sing when they awake."

And with the shouting, when their song was
do,¹⁸

That the fowls maden at their flight away,
I woke, and other bookēs took me to,
To read upon ; and yet I read alway.
I hope, y-wis, to readē so some day,
That I shall meetē something for to fare
The bet ;¹⁹ and thus to read I will not spare.

Explicit.

THE FLOWER AND THE LEAF.

["The Flower and the Leaf" is pre-eminently one of those poems by which Chaucer may be triumphantly defended against the charge of licentious coarseness, that, founded upon his faithful representation of the manners, customs, and daily life and speech of his own time, in "The Canterbury Tales," are sweepingly advanced against his works at large. In an allegory—rendered perhaps somewhat cumbrous by the detail of chivalric ceremonial, and the heraldic minuteness, which entered so liberally into poetry, as into the daily life of the classes for whom poetry was then written—Chaucer beautifully enforces the lasting advantages of purity, valour, and faithful love, and the fleeting and disappointing character of mere idle pleasure, of sloth and listless retirement from the battle of life. In the "season sweet" of spring, which the great singer of Middle Age England loved so well, a gentlewoman is supposed to seek sleep in vain, to rise "about the springing of the gladsome day," and, by an unfrequented path in a pleasant grove, to arrive at an arbour. Beside the arbour stands a medlar-tree, in which a Goldfinch sings passing sweetly ; and the Nightin-

¹ Under your rod, or government.

² Request, favour.

⁴ Though ye slay me.

⁶ Strive.

⁷ Whatsoever may afterwards happen.

⁸ This dainty dish (entremet) is prepared for you all alike.

¹⁰ Wended, went.

¹² Custom, usage.

³ Manner.

⁵ Happen.

¹¹ Enfold, caress.

¹³ "Who well loves, late forgets ;" the refrain of the roundel inculcates the duty of constancy, which has been imposed on the three tercels by the decision of the Court.

¹⁴ Dispersed, overcome.

¹⁵ Black.

¹⁷ Mate.

¹⁹ Meet something (in my reading) by which I shall receive advantage ; "bet" contracted for "better."

¹⁶ Be glad, make mirth.

¹⁸ Done.

gale answers from a green laurel tree, with so merry and ravishing a note, that the lady resolves to proceed no farther, but sit down on the grass to listen. Suddenly the sound of many voices singing surprises her; and she sees "a world of ladies" emerge from a grove, clad in white, and wearing garlands of laurel, of *agnus castus*, and woodbind. One, who wears a crown and bears a branch of *agnus castus* in her hand, begins a roundel, in honour of the Leaf, which all the others take up, dancing and singing in the meadow before the arbour. Soon, to the sound of thundering trumps, and attended by a splendid and warlike retinue, enter nine knights, in white, crowned like the ladies; and after they have jostled an hour and more, they alight and advance to the ladies. Each dame takes a knight by the hand; and all incline reverently to the laurel tree, which they encompass, singing of love, and dancing. Soon, preceded by a band of minstrels, out of the open field comes a lusty company of knights and ladies in green, crowned with chaplets of flowers; and they do reverence to a tuft of flowers in the middle of the meadow, while one of their number sings a bergerette in praise of the daisy. But now it is high noon; the sun waxes fervently hot; the flowers lose their beauty, and wither with the heat; the ladies in green are scorched, the knights faint for lack of shade. Then a strong wind beats down all the flowers, save such as are protected by the leaves of hedges and groves; and a mighty storm of rain and hail drenches the ladies and knights, shelterless in the now flowerless meadow. The storm overpast, the company in white, whom the laurel-tree has safely shielded from heat and storm, advance to the relief of the others; and when their clothes have been dried, and their wounds from sun and storm healed, all go together to sup with the Queen in white—on whose hand, as they pass by the arbour, the Nightingale perches, while the Goldfinch flies to the Lady of the Flower. The pageant gone, the gentlewoman quits the arbour, and meets a lady in white, who, at her request, unfolds the hidden meaning of all that she has seen; "which," says Speght quaintly, "is this: They which honour the Flower, a thing fading with every blast, are such as look after beauty and worldly pleasure. But they that honour the Leaf, which abideth with the root, notwithstanding the frosts and winter storms, are they which follow Virtue and during qualities, without regard of worldly respects." Mr Bell, in his edition, has properly noticed that there is no explanation of the emblematical import of the medlar-tree, the goldfinch, and the nightingale. "But," he says, "as the fruit of the medlar, to use Chaucer's own expression (see Prologue to Reeve's Tale), is rotten before it is ripe, it may be the emblem of sensual pleasure, which palls before it confers real enjoyment. The goldfinch is remarkable for the beauty of its plumage, the sprightliness of its movements, and its gay, tinkling song, and may be supposed to represent the showy and unsubstantial character of frivolous pleasures. The nightingale's sober outward appearance and impassioned song denote greater depth of feeling." The poem throughout is marked by the purest and loftiest moral tone; and it amply deserved Dryden's special recommendation, "both for the invention and the moral." It is given without abridgement.]

When that Phoebus his car of gold so high
Had whirled up the starry sky aloft,
And in the Bull¹ was enter'd certainly;
When showers sweet of rain descended soft,
Causing the ground², fel³ times and oft,
Up for to give many a wholesome air,
And every plain was y-clothed fair

With new⁴ green, and maketh small⁵ flow'rs
To spring⁶ here and there in field and mead;
So very good and wholesome be the show'rs,
That they renew⁷ what was old and dead
In winter time; and out of ev'ry seed
Springeth the herb⁸, so that ev'ry wight
Of thilk⁹ season waxeth glad and light.

And I, so glad of thilk⁹ season sweet,
Was happed thus⁴ upon a certain night,
As I lay in my bed, sleep full unmeet⁵
Was unto me; but why that I not might

¹ The sign of Taurus, which the sun enters in May.

² Many.

³ This.

⁴ Was thus circumstanced.

⁵ Unfit, uncompliant.

Rest, I not wist; for there n'as⁶ earthly
wight,

As I suppose, had mor⁷ heart⁸'s ease
Than I, for I n' had⁷ sickness nor disease.⁸

Wherefore I marvel greatly of myself,
That I so long without⁹ sleep⁹ lay;
And up I rose three hours after twelf,
About the springing of the [gladsome] day;
And on I put my gear⁹ and mine array,
And to a pleasant grove I gan to pass,
Long ere the bright⁹ sun uprisen was;

In which were oak⁹s great, straight as a line,
Under the which the grass, so fresh of hue,
Was newly sprung; and an eight foot or nine
Every tree well from his fellow grew,
With branches broad, laden with leav⁹s new,
That sprangen out against the sunn⁹ sheen;
Some very red;¹⁰ and some a glad light green;

⁶ Was not.

⁷ Had not.

⁸ Garments.

¹⁰ The young oak leaves are red or ashen coloured.

⁹ Distress, uneasiness.

Which, as me thought, was right a pleasant
sight.

And eke the birdes' songes for to hear
Would have rejoiced any earthly wight;
And I, that could not yet, in no mannere,
Hearde the nightingale of¹ all the year,
Full busy hearkened with heart and ear,
If I her voice perceiue could anywhere.

And at the last a path of little brede²
I found, that greatly had not used be;³
For it forgrowen⁴ was with grass and weed,
That well unneth⁵ a wight it mighte see:
Thought I, "This path some whither goes,
pardie!"⁶

And so I follow'd [it], till it me brought
To a right pleasant arbour, well y-wrought,

That benched⁷ was, and [all] with turfs new
Freshly y-turf'd, whereof the green grass,
So small, so thick, so short, so fresh of hue,
That most like to green wool, I wot, it was;
The hedge also, that yeden in compasse,⁸
And closed in all the green herbere,⁹
With sycamore was set and eglatere,¹⁰

Wreathed in fere¹¹ so well and cunningly,
That ev'ry branch and leaf grew by mesure,¹²
Plain as a board, of a height by and by:¹³
I saw never a thing, I you ensure,
So well y-done; for he that took the cure¹⁴
To maken it, I trow did all his pain
To make it pass all those that men have seen.

And shapen was this arbour, roof and all,
As is a pretty parlour; and also
The hedge as thick was as a castle wall,
That whoso list without to stand or go,
Though he would all day pryen to and fro,
He should not see if there were any wight
Within or no; but one within well might

Perceive all those that wente there without
Into the field, that was on ev'ry side
Cover'd with corn and grass; that out of doubt,
Though one would seeken all the world wide,
So rich a field could not be espied
Upon no coast, as of the quantity;¹⁵
For of all good thing there was plenty.

And I, that all this pleasant sight [did] see,
Thought suddenly I felt so sweet an air
Of the eglenterie, that certainly
There is no heart, I deem, in such despair,
Nor yet with thoughtes froward and contrair
So overlaid, but it should soon have boot,¹⁶
If it had ones felt this savour sweet.¹⁷

And as I stood, and cast aside mine eye,
I was ware of the fairest medlar tree
That ever yet in all my life I seye,¹⁸

¹ During. Chaucer here again refers to the superstition, noticed in "The Cuckoo and the Nightingale," that it was of good omen to hear the nightingale before the cuckoo upon the advent of both with spring.

² Breadth.

³ Been.

⁴ Overgrown.

⁵ Scarcely, with difficulty.

⁶ Of a surety.

⁷ Furnished with seats, which had been newly covered with turf.

⁸ Went all around; "yede" or "yead," is the old form of go.

⁹ Arbour; akin to "herberow," lodging, shelter.

¹⁰ Eglantine, sweet-briar.

As full of blossoms as it mighte be;
Therein a goldfinch leaping prettily
From bough to bough; and as him list he eat
Here and there of the buds and flowers sweet.

And to the arbour side was adjoining
This fairest tree, of which I have you told;
And at the last the bird began to sing
(When he had eaten what he eatd wo'ld)
So passing sweetly, that by many fold
It was more pleasant than I could devise;¹⁹
And, when his song was ended in this wise,

The nightingale with so merry a note
Answered him, that all the woodd rung,
So suddenly, that, as it were a sote,
I stood astound';²⁰ so was I with the song
Thorough ravished, that, till late and long,²¹
I wist not in what place I was, nor where;
Again, me thought, she sung e'en by mine ear.

Wherefore I waited²² about busily
On ev'ry side, if that I might her see;
And at the last I gan full well espy
Where she sat in a fresh green laurel tree,
On the further side, even right by me,
That gave so passing a delicious smell,
According to the eglantere full well.²³

Whereof I had so inly great pleasure,
That, as me thought, I surely ravish'd was
Into Paradise, where [as] my desire
Was for to be, and no farther to pass,
As for that day; and on the sweet grass
I sat me down; for, as for mine intent,²⁴
The bird's song was more convenient,²⁵

And more pleasant to me, by many fold,
Than meat, or drink, or any other thing;
Thereto the arbour was so fresh and cold,
The wholesome savours eke so comforting,
That, as I deemed, since the beginning
Of the world was [there] never seen ere than²⁶
So pleasant a ground of none earthly man.

And as I sat, the birdes heark'ning thus,
Me thought that I heard voices suddenly,
The most sweetest and most delicious
That ever any wight, I trow truly,²⁷
Heard in their life; for the harmony
And sweet accord was in so good musike,
That the voices to angels' most were like.

At the last, out of a grove even by,
That was right goodly, and pleasant to sight,
I saw where there came, singing lustily,
A world of ladies; but to tell aright
Their great beauty, lies not in my might,
Nor their array; nevertheless I shall
Tell you a part, though I speak not of all.

In surcoats²⁸ white, of velvet well fitting,

¹¹ Together.

¹² Regularly.

¹³ Of the same height side by side.

¹⁴ Pains, care.

¹⁵ For its abundance or fertility.

¹⁶ Remedy, relief.

¹⁷ Sweet smell.

¹⁸ Saw.

¹⁹ Tell, describe.

²⁰ I stood astounded or stupefied, like a fool—French "sot."

²¹ For a long time.

²² Watched, looked.

²³ Agreeing or blending pleasantly with the smell of the sweet-briar.

²⁴ To my mind.

²⁵ Befitting my taste or humour.

²⁶ Then.

²⁷ I verily believe.

²⁸ Upper robes.

They werē clad, and the seamēs each one,
As it were a mannere [of] garnishīng,
Was set with emeraldēs, one and one,
By and by;¹ but many a richē stone
Was set upon the purples,² out of doubt,
Of collars, sleeves, and trainēs round about;

As greatē pearlēs, round and orient,³
And diamondēs fine, and rubies red,
And many another stone, of which I went⁴
The namēs now; and ev'reach on her head
[Had] a rich fret⁵ of gold, which, without
dread,⁶

Was full of statelī⁷ richē stonēs set;
And ev'ry lady had a chapēlet

Upon her head of branches fresh and green,⁸
So well y-wrought, and so marvellously,
That it was a right noble sight to see'n;
Some of laurel, and some full pleasantly
Had chapēlets of woodbine; and sadly,⁹
Some of *agnus castus*¹⁰ waren also
Chapēlets fresh; but there were many of tho'¹¹

That danced and eke sung full soberly;
And all they went in manner of compāss;¹²
But one there went, in mid the company,
Sole by herself; but all follow'd the pace
That she kept, whose heavenly figur'd face
So pleasant was, and her well shap'd persōn,
That in beauty she pass'd them ev'ry one.

And more richly beseen, by many fold,
She was alsō in ev'ry manner thing:
Upon her head, full pleasant to behold,
A crown of goldē, rich for any king;
A branch of *agnus castus* eke bearing
In her hand, and to my sight truēly
She Lady was of all that company.

And she began a roundel¹³ lustily,
That "*Suse le foylē, devers moi,*" men call,
"*Sicne et mon joly cœur est endormy;*"¹⁴
And then the company answered all,
With voices sweet entuned, and so small,¹⁵
That me thought it the sweetest melody
That ever I heard in my life, soothly.¹⁶

And thus they camē, dancing and singīng,
Into the midst of the mead each one,
Before the arbour where I was sittīng;
And, God wot, me thought I was well-begone,¹⁷
For then I might advise¹⁸ them one by one,
Who fairest was, who best could dance or sing,
Or who most womanly was in all thing.

They had not danced but a little throw,¹⁹

When that I heardē far off, suddenly,
So great a noise of thund'ring trumpets blow,
As though it should departed²⁰ have the sky;
And after that, within a while, I sigh,²¹
From the same grove, where the ladies came out,
Of men of armēs coming such a rout,²²

As²³ all the men on earth had been assembled
Unto that place, well horsed for the nonce;²⁴
Stirring so fast, that all the earthē trembled;
But for to speak of riches, and of stones,
And men and horse, I trow the largē ones²⁵
Of Prester John,²⁶ nor all his treasury,
Mightnot unneth²⁷ have bought the tenth party²⁸

Of their array: whoso list hearē more,
I shall rehearse so as I can a lite.²⁹
Out of the grove, that I spake of before,
I saw come first, all in their cloakēs white,
A company, that wore, for their delight,
Chapēlets fresh of oakē cerrial,³⁰
Newly y-sprung; and trumpets³¹ were they all.

On ev'ry trump hanging a broad bannere
Of fine tartarium³² was, full richly beat;³³
Every trumpet his lord's armēs bare;
About their necks, with greatē pearlēs set,
[Were] collars broad; for cost they would not
let,³⁴

As it would seem, for their scutcheons each one
Were set about with many a precious stone.

Their horses' harness was all white alsō.
And after them next, in one company,
Camē kingēs at armēs and no mo',
In cloakēs of white cloth with gold richly;
Chaplets of green upon their heads on high;
The crownēs that they on their scutcheons bare
Were set with pearl, and ruby, and sapphire,

And eke great diamondēs many one:
But all their horse harness, and other gear,
Was in a suit according, ev'ry one,
As ye have heard the foresaid trumpets were;
And, by seemīng, they were nothing to lear,³⁵
And their guiding they did all mannerly.³⁶
And after them came a great company

Of heraldēs and pursuivantēs eke,
Arrayed in clothēs of white velvét;
And, hardily,³⁷ they were no thing to seek,³⁸
How they on them shouldē the harness set:
And ev'ry man had on a chapēlet;
Scutcheonēs and ekē harnēs, indeed,
They had in suit of³⁹ them that 'fore them yede.⁴⁰

¹ Side by side, in a row.

² The embroidered edges.

⁴ Want; cannot recall.

⁶ Doubt.

⁸ See note 15, page 211.

⁹ Sedately.

¹⁰ The chaste-tree; a kind of willow.

¹¹ These.

¹³ French, "*rondeau*;" a song that comes round again to the verse with which it opened, or that is taken up in turn by each of the singers.

¹⁴ In modern French form, "*Sous la feuille, devers moi, son et mon joly cœur est endormi*"—"Under the foliage, towards me, his and my jolly heart is gone to sleep."

¹⁵ Fine.

¹⁷ Fortunate.

¹⁹ A short time.

³ Brilliant.

⁵ Band.

⁷ Valuable, noble.

¹² In a circle.

¹⁶ Truly.

¹⁸ Consider.

²⁰ Rent, divided.

²¹ Saw.

²³ As if.

²⁵ The great gems.

²⁶ The half-mythical Eastern potentate, who is now supposed to have been, not a Christian monarch of Abyssinia, but the head of the Indian empire before Zenghis Khan's conquest.

²⁷ Hardly.

²⁹ A little.

³¹ Trumpeters.

³³ Stamped, embroidered with gold.

³⁴ They would not be restrained by cost.

³⁵ They had nothing to learn—were perfectly instructed in their duties.

³⁶ They performed their office in a perfect manner.

³⁷ Assuredly.

³⁸ In no wise at fault.

³⁹ Corresponding with.

²² Company.

²⁴ For the occasion.

²⁸ Part.

³⁰ See note 15, page 89.

³² Cloth of Tars, or of Tortona.

⁴⁰ Went.

Next after them in came, in armour bright,
All save their headës, seemly knightës nine,
And ev'ry clasp and nail, as to my sight,
Of their harnëss was of red goldë fine ;
With cloth of gold, and furred with ermine,
Werë the trappures¹ of their steedes strong,
Both wide and large, that to the groundë hung.

And ev'ry boss of bridle and paytrél²
That they had on, was worth, as I would ween,
A thousand pound ; and on their headës, well
Dressed, were crownës of the laurel green,
The bestë made that ever I had seen ;
And ev'ry knight had after him riding
Three henchëmen³ upon him awaiting.

Of which ev'ry [first], on a short truncheón,⁴
His lordë's helmet bare, so richly dight,⁵
That the worst of them was worthy the ransón⁶
Of any king ; the second a shieldë bright
Bare at his back ; the thirdë bare upright
A mighty spear, full sharp y-ground and keen ;
And ev'ry childë⁷ ware of leavës green

A freshë chaplet on his hairës bright ;
And cloakës white of fine velvét they ware ;
Their steedës trapped and arrayed right,
Without difference, as their lordës' were ;
And after them, on many a fresh coursér,
There came of armed knightës such a rout,⁸
That they bespread the largë field about.

And all they waren, after their degrees,
Chapélets newë made of laurel green,
Some of the oak, and some of other trees ;
Some in their handës barë boughës sheen,
Some of laurél, and some of oakës keen,
Some of hawthörn, and some of the woodbind,
And many more which I had not in mind.

And so they came, their horses fresh stirring
With bloody soundës of their trumpets loud ;
There saw I many an uncouth disguising⁹
In the array of thesë knightës proud ;
And at the last, as evenly as they could,
They took their place in midst of the mead,
And ev'ry knight turned his horse's head

To his fellów, and lightly laid a spear
Into the rest ; and so the jousts began
On ev'ry part aboutë, here and there ;
Some brake his spear, some threw down horse
and man ;

About the field astray the steedës ran ;
And, to behold thei rule and governance,¹⁰
I you ensure, it was a great pleasáncë.

And so the joustës last¹¹ an hour and more ;
But those that crowned were in laurel green
Wonnë the prize ; their dintës¹² were so sore,
That there was none against them might sus-
tene :¹³

And the jousting was allë left off clean,

¹ Trappings.

² Breast-plate (of a horse's harness).

³ Pages, attendants.

⁴ Adorned.

⁵ Youth (among the pages).

⁶ Strange, rare, manoeuvring.

⁷ Conduct of the fight.

⁸ Strokes.

⁹ Staff.

¹⁰ Ransom.

¹¹ Company, crowd.

¹² Lasted.

¹³ Bear up, endure.

And from their horse the nine alight' anon,
And so did all the remnant ev'ry one.

And forth they went together, twain and
twain,
That to behold it was a worthy sight,
Toward the ladies on the greenë plain,
That sang and danced, as I said now right ;
The ladies, as soon as they goodly might,
They brake off both the song and eke the dance,
And went to meet them with full glad sem-
bláncë.¹⁴

And ev'ry lady took, full womanly,
By th' hand a knight, and so forth right they
yede¹⁵

Unto a fair laurél that stood fast by,
With leavës lade the boughs of greatë brede ;¹⁶
And, to my doom,¹⁷ there never was, indeed,
Man that had seenë half so fair a tree ;
For underneath it there might well have be¹⁸

A hundred persons, at their own pleasáncë,¹⁹
Shadowed from the heat of Phoebus bright,
So that they shouldë have felt no grieváncë²⁰
Of rain nor hailë that them hurtë might.
The savour eke rejoice would any wight
That had been sick or melancholious,
It was so very good and virtuous.²¹

And with great rev'rence they inclined low
Unto the tree so sweet and fair of hue ;²²
And after that, within a little throw,²³
They all began to sing and dance of new,
Some song of love, some plaining of untrue,²⁴
Environing²⁵ the tree that stood upright ;
And ever went a lady and a knight.

And at the last I cast mine eye aside,
And was ware of a lusty company
That came roaming out of the fieldë wide ;
[And] hand in hand a knight and a lady ;
The ladies all in surcoats, that richly
Purfiled²⁶ were with many a richë stone ;
And ev'ry knight of green ware mantles on,

Embroider'd well, so as the surcoats were ;
And ev'reach had a chaplet on her head
(Which did right well upon the shining hair),
Maked of goodly flowers, white and red.
The knightës eke, that they in handë led,
In suit of them ware chaplets ev'ry one,
And them before went minstrels many one,

As harpës, pipës, lutës, and psaltrý,
All [clad] in green ; and, on their headës bare,
Of divers flowers, made full craftily
All in a suit, goodly chaplets they ware ;
And so dancing into the mead they fare.
In mid the which they found a tuft that was
All overspread with flowers in compássa,²⁷

Whereunto they inclined ev'ry one,
With great reverence, and that full humbly ;

¹⁴ Air, aspect.

¹⁵ Went.

¹⁶ Whose broad boughs were laden with leaves.

¹⁷ Judgment.

¹⁸ Been.

¹⁹ In perfect comfort.

²⁰ Annoyance.

²¹ Full of healing virtues.

²² Appearance.

²³ Short time.

²⁴ Complaint of lover's untruth.

²⁵ Encompassing.

²⁶ Trimmed at the borders.

²⁷ Around, in a circle.

And at the last there then began anon
A lady for to sing right womanly,
A bargaret,¹ in praising the daisy.
For, as me thought, among her notës sweet,
She saidë : "*Si douce est la margarete.*"²

Then allë they answered her in fere³
So passingly well, and so pleasantly,
That it was a [most] blissful noise to hear.
But, I n'ot⁴ how, it happen'd suddenly
As about noon the sun so fervently
Wax'd hotë, that the pretty tender flow'rs
Had lost the beauty of their fresh colour's,

Forshrun⁵ with heat ; the ladies eke to-
brent,⁶
That they knew not where they might them
bestow ;
The knightës swelt,⁷ for lack of shade nigh
shent ;⁸

And after that, within a little throw,
The wind began so sturdily to blow,
That down went all the flowers ev'ry one,
So that in all the mead there left⁹ not one ;

Save such as succour'd were among the leaves
From ev'ry storm that mightë them assail,
Growing under the hedges and thick greves ;¹⁰
And after that there came a storm of hail
And rain in fere,¹¹ so that withoutë fail
The ladies nor the knights had not one thread
Dry on them, so dropping was [all] their weed.¹²

And when the storm was passed clean away,
Those in the white, that stood under the tree,
They felt no thing of all the great affray
That they in green without had in y-be :¹³
To them they went for ruth, and for pity,
Them to comfort after their great disease ;¹⁴
So fain¹⁵ they were the helpless for to ease.

Then I was ware how one of them in green
Had on a crownë, rich and well sitting ;¹⁶
Wherefore I deemed well she was a queen,
And those in green on her were awaiting.¹⁷
The ladies then in white that were coming
Toward them, and the knightës eke in fere,
Began to comfort them, and make them cheer.

The queen in white, that was of great beauty,
Took by the hand the queen that was in green,
And saidë : " Sister, I have great pity
Of your annoy, and of your troublous teen,¹⁸
Wherein you and your company have been
So long, alas ! and if that it you please
To go with me, I shall you do the ease,

" In all the pleasure that I can or may ; "
Whereof the other, humbly as she might,
Thanked her ; for in right evil array
She was, with storm and heat, I you behight ;¹⁹
And ev'ry lady then anon aright,

¹ Bergerette, or pastoral song.

² "So sweet is the daisy" ("la marguerite").

³ Together.

⁴ Know not.

⁵ Shrivelled up.

⁶ Thoroughly scorched.

⁷ Fainted.

⁸ Destroyed.

⁹ Remained.

¹⁰ Groves, boughs.

¹¹ Clothing.

¹² Had been in.

¹³ Trouble.

¹⁴ Glad, eager.

¹⁵ Becoming.

¹⁶ In attendance.

¹⁷ Injury, grief.

¹⁸ I promise you, I assure you.

That were in white, one of them took in green
By the hand ; which when that the knights had
seen,

In like mannëre eath of them took a knight
Y-clad in green, and forth with them they fare
Unto a hedge, where that they anon right,
To makë their joustës,¹⁹ they would not spare
Boughës to hewë down, and eke trees square,
Wherewith they made them stately firës great,
To dry their clothës, that were wringing wet.

And after that, of herbës that there grew,
They made, for blisters of²⁰ the sun's burning,
Ointmentës very good, wholesome, and new,
Wherewith they went the sick fast anointing ;
And after that they went about gath'ring
Pleasant saladës, which they made them eat,
For to refresh their great unkindly heat.

The Lady of the Leaf then gan to pray
Her of the Flower (for so, to my seeming,
They should be called, as by their array),
To sup with her ; and eke, for anything,
That she should with her all her people bring ;
And she again in right goodly mannëre
Thanked her fast of her most friendly cheer ;

Saying plainëly, that she would obey,
With all her heart, all her commandëment :
And then anon, without longer delay,
The Lady of the Leaf hath one y-sent
To bring a palfrey, after her intent,²¹
Arrayed well in fair harnëss of gold ;
For nothing lack'd, that to him longë sho'ld.²²

And, after that, to all her company
She made to purvey²³ horse and ev'rything
That they needed ; and then full lustily,
Ev'n by the arbour where I was sitting,
They passed all, so merrily singing,
That it would have comforted any wight.
But then I saw a passing wondrous sight ;

For then the nightingale, that all the day
Had in the laurel sat, and did her might
The whole service to sing longing to May,
All suddenly began to take her flight ;
And to the Lady of the Leaf forthright
She flew, and set her on her hand softly ;
Which was a thing I marvell'd at greatly.

The goldfinch eke, that from the medlar tree
Was fled for heat into the bushes cold,
Unto the Lady of the Flower gan flee,
And on her hand he set him as he wo'ld,
And pleasantly his wingës gan to fold ;
And for to sing they pain'd them²⁴ both, as sore
As they had done of all²⁵ the day before.

And so these ladies rode forth a great pace,²⁶
And all the rout of knightës eke in fere ;

¹⁹ The meaning is not very obvious ; but in The Knight's Tale "jousts and array" are in some editions made part of the adornment of the Temple of Venus ; and as the word "jousts" would there carry the general meaning of "preparations" to entertain or please a lover, in the present case it may have a similar force.

²⁰ Of the wounds made by.

²¹ According to her wish.

²² That should belong to him.

²³ Made their utmost exertions.

²⁴ During.

²⁵ Provide.

²⁶ Rapidly.

And I, that had seen all this wonder case,¹
Thought that I would assay in some mannere
To know fully the truth of this matiere,
And what they were that rode so pleasantly;
And when they were the arbour passed by,

I dress'd me forth,² and happ'd to meet anon
A right fair lady, I do you ensure;³
And she came riding by herself alone,
All in white; [then] with semblance full demure
I her salued, and bade⁴ good aventure⁵
Might her befall, as I could most humbly;
And she answer'd: "My daughter, gramercy!"⁶

"Madame," quoth I, "if that I durst enquire
Of you, I would fain, of that company,
Wit what they be that pass'd by this herbere?"
And she again answered right friendly:
"My fairer daughter, all that pass'd hereby
In white clothing, be servants ev'ry one
Unto the Leaf; and I myself am one.

"See ye not her that crowned is," quoth she,
"[Clad] all in white?"—"Madame," then
quoth I, "yes:"

"That is Dian', goddess of chastity;
And for because that she a maiden is,
In her hande the branch she beareth this,
That *agnus castus* men call properly;
And all the ladies in her company,

"Which ye see of that herbè chaplets wear,
Be such as have kept alway maidenhead:
And all they that of laurel chaplets bear,
Be such as hardy⁷ were in manly deed,—
Victorious name which never may be dead!
And all they were so worthy of their hand⁸
In their time, that no one might them withstand.

"And those that wearè chaplets on their head
Of fresh woodbind, be such as never were
To love untrue in word, in thought, nor deed,
But ay steadfast; nor for pleasance, nor fear,
Though that they should their heartes all to-tear,⁹
Would never flit,¹⁰ but ever were steadfast,
Till that their livès there asunder brast."¹¹

"Now fair Madàme," quoth I, "yet would I
pray
Your ladyship, if that it mightè be,
That I might knowè, by some manner way
(Sincè that it hath liked your beauty,
The truth of these ladies for to tell me),
What that these knightès be in rich armour,
And what those be in green and wear the flow'r?"

"And why that some did rev'rence to that tree,
And some unto the plot of flowers fair?"

¹ This wondrous incident.

² Issued forth.

³ I warrant you. ⁴ Prayed, wished. ⁵ Fortune.

⁶ "Grand merci," French; great thanks.

⁷ Courageous.

⁸ So valiant in fight.

⁹ Rend in pieces.

¹⁰ Change, swerve.

¹¹ Burst, broke; till they died.

¹² Gentle, courteous.

¹³ The true examples.

¹⁴ The Nine Worthies, who at our day survive in the Seven Champions of Christendom. The Worthies were favourite subjects for representation at popular festivals or in masquerades.

¹⁵ The famous Knights of King Arthur, who, being all esteemed equal in valour and noble qualities, sat at a round table, so that none should seem to have precedence over the rest.

¹⁶ The twelve peers of Charlemagne (*les douze pairs*), chief among whom were Roland and Oliver.

"With right good will, my daughter fair,"
quoth she,

"Since your desire is good and debonair;¹²
The nine crowned be very exemplair¹³
Of all honour longing to chivalry;
And those certain be call'd The Nine Worthy,¹⁴

"Which ye may see now riding all before,
That in their time did many a noble deed,
And for their worthiness full oft have bore
The crown of laurel leaves upon their head,
As ye may in your oldè bookès read;
And how that he that was a conquerour
Had by laurel alway his most honour.

"And those that beare boughès in their hand
Of the precious laurel so notable,
Be such as were, I will ye understand,
Most noble Knightès of the Roundè Table,¹⁵
And eke the Doucèperès honourable;¹⁶
Whichè they bear in sign of victory,
As witness of their deedès mightily.

"Eke there be knightès old¹⁷ of the Garter,
That in their timè did right worthily;
And the honour they did to the laurèr¹⁸
Is for¹⁹ by it they have their laud whollý,
Their triumph eke, and martial glory;
Which unto them is more perfect richès
Than any wight imagine can, or guess.

"For one leaf given of that noble tree
To any wight that hath done worthily,
An'²⁰ it be done so as it ought to be,
Is more honour than any thing earthlý;
Witness of Rome, that founder was truly
Of allè knighthood and deedès marvellous;
Recórd I take of Titus Livius."²¹

"And as for her that crowned is in green,
It is Flora, of these flowers goddess;
And all that here on her awaiting be'n,
It are such folk that loved idleness,
And not delighted in no business,
But for to hunt and hawk, and play in meads,
And many other such-like idle deedès.

"And for the great delight and the pleasance
They have to the flow'r, and so rev'rently
They unto it do such obèisance
As ye may see." "Now, fair Madàme," quoth I,
"If I durst ask, what is the cause, and why,
That knightès have the ensign²² of honour
Rather by the leaf than by the flow'r?"

"Soothly, daughter," quoth she, "this is the
troth:

¹⁷ Chaucer speaks as if, at least for the purposes of his poetry, he believed that Edward III. did not establish a new, but only revived an old, chivalric institution, when he founded the Order of the Garter.

¹⁸ Laurel-tree; French, "laurier."

¹⁹ Because.

²⁰ If.

²¹ The meaning is: "Witness the practice of Rome, that was the founder of all knighthood and marvellous deedès; and I refer for corroboration to Titus Livius"—who, in several passages, has mentioned the laurel crown as the highest military honour. For instance, in l. vii. c. 13, Sextus Tullius, remonstrating for the army against the inaction in which it is kept, tells the Dictator Sulpicius, "Duce te vincere cupimus; tibi lauream insignem deferre; tecum triumphantes urbem inire."

²² Insignia, badge.

For knights should ever be persévering,
To seek honour, without feintise¹ or sloth,
From well to better in all manner thing :
In sign of which, with leavës aye lasting
They be rewarded after their degree,
Whose lusty green may not appaired² be,

“But ay keeping their beauty fresh and
green ;

For there is no storm that may them deface,
Nor hail nor snow, nor wind nor frostës keen ;
Wherefore they have this property and grace :
And for the flow'r, within a little space,
Wollë³ be lost, so simple of nature
They be, that they no grievance⁴ may endure ;

“And ev'ry storm will blow them soon away,
Nor they lastë not but for a season ;
That is the cause, the very truth to say,
That they may not, by no way of reason,
Be put to no such occupation.”

“Madame,” quoth I, “with all my whole service
I thank you now, in my most humble wise ;

“For now I am ascertainment'd thoroughly
Of ev'ry thing that I desir'd to know.”

“I am right glad that I have said, soothly,
Aught to your pleasure, if ye will me trow,”⁵
Quoth she again ; “but to whom do ye owe

Your service ? and which wollë⁶ ye honour,
Tell me, I pray, this year, the Leaf or the
Flow'r ?”

“Madame,” quoth I, “though I be least worthy,
Unto the Leaf I owe mine observance :”

“That is,” quoth she, “right well done, certainly ;
And I pray God, to honour you advance,
And keep you from the wicked remembrance
Of Malebouche,⁶ and all his cruelty ;
And all that good and well-condition'd be.

“For here may I no longer now abide ;
I must follow the greatë company,
That ye may see yonder before you ride.”
And forthwith, as I couldë, most humbly
I took my leave of her, and she gan hie⁷
After them as fast as she ever might ;
And I drew homeward, for it was nigh night,

And put all that I had seen in writing,
Under support⁸ of them that list it read.
O little book ! thou art so uncunning,
How dar'st thou put thyself in press,⁹ for dread ?
It is wonder that thou waxest not red !
Since that thou know'st full lite¹⁰ who shall
behold

Thy rude language, full boistously unfold.¹¹

Explicit.

THE HOUSE OF FAME.

[THANKS partly to Pope's brief and elegant paraphrase, in his “Temple of Fame,” and partly to the familiar force of the style and the satirical significance of the allegory, “The House of Fame” is among the best known and relished of Chaucer's minor poems. The octosyllabic measure in which it is written—the same which the author of “Hudibras” used with such admirable effect—is excellently adapted for the vivid descriptions, the lively sallies of humour and sarcasm, with which the poem abounds ; and when the poet actually does get to his subject, he treats it with a zest, and a corresponding interest on the part of the reader, which are scarcely surpassed by the best of The Canterbury Tales. The poet, however, tarries long on the way to the House of Fame ; as Pope says in his advertisement, the reader who would compare his with Chaucer's poem, “may begin with [Chaucer's] third Book of Fame, there being nothing in the two first books that answers to their title.” The first book opens with a kind of prologue (actually so marked and called in earlier editions) in which the author speculates on the causes of dreams ; avers that never any man had such a dream as he had on the tenth of December ; and prays the God of Sleep to help him to interpret the dream, and the Mover of all things to reward or afflict those readers who take the dream well or ill. Then he relates that, having fallen asleep, he fancied himself within a temple of glass—the abode of Venus—the walls of which were painted with the story of Æneas. The paintings are described at length ; and then the poet tells us that, coming out of the temple, he found himself on a vast sandy plain, and saw high in heaven an eagle, that began to descend towards him. With the prologue, the first book numbers

¹ Dissimulation. ² Impaired, decayed. ³ Will.

⁴ Injury, hardship. ⁵ Believe.

⁶ Slander, personified under the title of Evil-mouth—Italian, “Malbocca ;” French, “Malebouche.”

⁷ Haste.

⁸ Encouragement or patience ; the phrase means—trusting to the goodwill of my reader.

⁹ Into a crowd, into the press of competitors for favour ; not, it need hardly be said, “into the press” in the modern sense—printing was not invented for a century after this was written.

¹⁰ Little.

¹¹ Unfolded, set forth, in homely and unpolished fashion.

508 lines; of which 192 only—more than are actually concerned with or directly lead towards the real subject of the poem—are given here. The second book, containing 582 lines, of which 176 will be found in this edition, is wholly devoted to the voyage from the Temple of Venus to the House of Fame, which the dreamer accomplishes in the eagle's claws. The bird has been sent by Jove to do the poet some "solace" in reward of his labours for the cause of Love; and during the transit through the air the messenger discourses obligingly and learnedly with his human burden on the theory of sound, by which all that is spoken must needs reach the House of Fame; and on other matters suggested by their errand and their observations by the way. The third book (of 1080 lines, only a score of which, just at the outset, have been omitted) brings us to the real pith of the poem. It finds the poet close to the House of Fame, built on a rock of ice engraved with names, many of which are half-melted away. Entering the gorgeous palace, he finds all manner of minstrels and historians; harpers, pipers, and trumpeters of fame; magicians, jugglers, sorcerers, and many others. On a throne of ruby sits the goddess, seeming at one moment of but a cubit's stature, at the next touching heaven; and at either hand, on pillars, stand the great authors who "bear up the name" of ancient nations. Crowds of people enter the hall from all regions of earth, praying the goddess to give them good or evil fame, with and without their own deserts; and they receive answers favourable, negative, or contrary, according to the caprice of Fame. Pursuing his researches further, out of the region of reputation or fame proper into that of tidings or rumours, the poet is led, by a man who has entered into conversation with him, to a vast whirling house of twigs, ever open to the arrival of tidings, ever full of murmurings, whisperings, and clatterings, coming from the vast crowds that fill it—for every rumour, every piece of news, every false report, appears there in the shape of the person who utters it, or passes it on, down in earth. Out at the windows innumerable, the tidings pass to Fame, who gives to each report its name and duration; and in the house travellers, pilgrims, pardoners, couriers, lovers, &c., make a huge clamour. But here the poet meets with a man "of great authority," and, half afraid, awakes; skilfully—whether by intention, fatigue, or accident—leaving the reader disappointed by the non-fulfilment of what seemed to be promises of further disclosures. The poem, not least in the passages the omission of which has been dictated by the exigencies of the present volume, is full of testimony to the vast acquaintance of Chaucer with learning ancient and modern; Ovid, Virgil, Statius, are equally at his command to illustrate his narrative or to furnish the ground-work of his descriptions; while architecture, the Arabic numeration, the theory of sound, and the effects of gunpowder, are only a few among the topics of his own time of which the poet treats with the ease of proficient knowledge. Not least interesting are the vivid touches in which (page 235) Chaucer sketches the routine of his laborious and almost recluse daily life; while the strength, individuality, and humour that mark the didactic portion of the poem prove that "The House of Fame" was one of the poet's riper productions.]

GOD turn us ev'ry dream to good!
 For it is wonder thing, by the Rood,¹
 To my wittē, what causeth swevens,²
 Either on morrows or on evens;
 And why th' effect followeth of some,
 And of some it shall never come;
 Why this is an avisiōn
 And this a revelatiōn;
 Why this a dream, why that a sweven,
 And not to ev'ry man like even;³
 Why this a phantom,⁴ why these oracles,⁵
 I n'ot; but whose of these miracles
 The causes knoweth bet than I,
 Divine⁶ he; for I certainly
 Ne can⁷ them not, nor ever think
 To busy my wit for to swink⁸
 To know of their significānce
 The genders, neither the distance
 Of times of them, nor the causes
 For why that this more than that cause is;

¹ The cross; Anglo-Saxon, "rode."

² Dreams.

⁴ False or fantastic imagination.

⁵ Truthful foreshadowings of the future.

³ Alike.

Or if folkē's complexiōns
 Make them dream of reflectiōns;
 Or ellēs thus, as others sayn,
 For too great feebleness of the brain
 By abstinence, or by sicknēss,
 By prison, strife, or great distress,
 Or ellēs by disordinance
 Of natural accustomance;⁹
 That some men be too curious
 In study, or melancholious,
 Or thus, so inly full of dread,
 That no man may them bootē bede;¹⁰
 Or ellēs that devotiōn
 Of some, and contemplatiōn,
 Causeth to them such dreamēs oft;
 Or that the cruel life unsoft
 Of them that unkind lovēs lead,
 That often hopē much or dread,
 That purely their impressiōns
 Cause them to havē visiōns;

⁶ Or "define."

⁷ Do not know, understand.

⁸ Labour.

⁹ By derangement of natural habit or mode of life.

¹⁰ Afford them relief.

Or if that spirits have the might
 To makē folk to dream a-night;
 Or if the soul, of proper kind,¹
 Be so perfect as men find,
 That it forewot² what is to come,
 And that it warneth all and some
 Of ev'reach of their adventūres,
 By visions, or by figūres,
 But that our fleshē hath no might
 To understanden it aright,
 For it is warnēd too darkly;
 But why the cause is, not wot I.
 Well worth of this thing greatē clerks,³
 That treat of this and other works;
 For I of none opiniōn
 Will as now makē mentiōn;
 But only that the holy Rood
 Turn us every dream to good.
 For never since that I was born,
 Nor no man ellēs me beforē,
 Mette,⁴ as I trowē steadfastly,
 So wonderful a dream as I,
 The tenthē day now of December;
 The which, as I can it remember,
 I will you tellen ev'ry deal.⁵
 But at my beginning, trustē weel,⁶
 I will make invocatiōn,
 With speciāl devotiōn,
 Unto the god of Sleep anon,
 That dwelleth in a cave of stone,⁷
 Upon a stream that comes from Lete,
 That is a flood of hell unsweet,
 Beside a folk men call Cimmerie;
 There sleepeth ay this god unmerry,
 With his sleepy thousand sonēs,
 That alway for to sleep their won⁸ is;
 And to this god, that I of read,⁹
 Pray I, that he will me speed
 My sweven for to tell aright,
 If ev'ry dream stands in his might.
 And he that Mover is of all
 That is, and was, and ever shall,
 So give them joyē that it hear,
 Of allē that they dream to-year;¹⁰
 And for to standen all in grace¹¹
 Of their lovēs, or in what place
 That them were liefest¹² for to stand,
 And shield them from povért' and shand,¹³
 And from ev'ry unhap and disease,
 And send them all that may them please,
 That take it well, and scorn it not,
 Nor it misdeemen¹⁴ in their thought,

¹ Of its own nature.² Foreknows.³ Great scholars set much worth upon this thing—that is, devote much labour, attach much importance, to the subject of dreams.⁴ Dreamed.⁵ Every part or whit.⁶ Well.⁷ The poet briefly refers to the description of the House of Somnus, in Ovid's "Metamorphoses," l. xi. 592, et seq.; where the cave of Somnus is said to be "prope Cimmerios," and to have a stream of Lethe's water issuing from the base of the rock:—"Saxo tamen exit ab imo
 Rivus aque Lethe."⁸ Wont, custom.⁹ Of whom I tell you.¹⁰ This year.¹¹ In favour.¹² Most desired or agreeable.¹³ Poverty and shame.¹⁴ Misjudge.¹⁵ Jesting, buffoonery.¹⁶ Baseness of nature.

Through malicious intentiōn;
 And whoso, through presumptiōn,
 Or hate, or scorn, or through envý,
 Despite, or jape,¹⁵ or villainý,¹⁶
 Misdeem it, pray I Jesus God,
 That dream he barefoot, dream he shod,
 That ev'ry harm that any man
 Hath had since that the world began,
 Befall him thereof, ere he sterve,¹⁷
 And grant that he may it deserve,¹⁸
 Lo! with such a conclusiōn
 As had of his avisiōn
 Croesus, that was the king of Lyde,¹⁹
 That high upon a gibbet died;
 This prayer shall he have of me;
 I am no bet in charity.²⁰

Now hearken, as I have you said,
 What that I mette ere I abraid,²¹
 Of December the tenthē day;
 When it was night to sleep I lay,
 Right as I was wont for to do'n,
 And fell asleepē wonder soon,
 As he that weary was for go²²
 On pilgrimagē milēs two
 To the corsaint²³ Leonárd,
 To makē lithe that erst was hard.
 But, as I slept, me mette I was
 Within a temple made of glass;
 In which there werē more imáges
 Of gold, standing in sundry stages,
 And morē richē tabernácles,
 And with pierrie²⁴ more pinnácles,
 And more curious portraiturea,
 And quaintē manner²⁵ of figūres
 Of goldē work, than I saw ever.
 But, certainly, I wistē²⁶ never
 Where that it was, but well wist I
 It was of Venus readilý,
 This temple; for in portraiture
 I saw anon right her figūre
 Naked floating in a sea,²⁷
 And also on her head, pardie,
 Her rosē garland white and red,
 And her comb to comb her head,
 Her dovēs, and Dan Cupido,
 Her blindē son, and Vulcano,²⁸
 That in his facē was full brown.

As he "roamed up and down," the dreamer saw on the wall a tablet of brass inscribed with the opening lines of the *Æneid*; while the whole story of *Æneas* was told in the "portraitsures"

¹⁷ Die.¹⁸ Earn, obtain.¹⁹ See the account of his vision in *The Monk's Tale*, page 163.²⁰ No better in charity—no more charitable.²¹ Awoke.²² Was weary through having gone. The meaning of the allusion is not clear; but the story of the pilgrims and the peas is perhaps suggested by the third line following—"to makē lithe [soft] what erst was hard." St Leonard was the patron of captives.²³ The "corpus sanctum"—the holy body, or relics, preserved in the shrine.²⁴ Gems, precious stones.²⁵ Strange kinds.²⁶ Knew.²⁷ So, in the Temple of Venus described in *The Knight's Tale*, the Goddess is represented as "naked floating in the largē sea" (page 36).²⁸ Vulcan, the husband of Venus.

and gold work. About three hundred and fifty lines are devoted to the description; but they merely embody Virgil's account of Æneas' adventures from the destruction of Troy to his arrival in Italy; and the only characteristic passage is the following reflection, suggested by the death of Dido for her perfidious but fate-compelled guest:

Lo! how a woman doth amiss,
To love him that unknowen is!
For, by Christ, lo! thus it fareth,
It is not all gold that glareth.¹
For, all so brook I well my head,
There may be under goodlihead
Cover'd many a shrewd vice;²
Therefore let no wight be so nice
To take a love only for cheer,³
Or speech, or for friendly mannere;
For this shall ev'ry woman find,
That some man, of his purē kind,⁴
Will shoven outward the fairēst,
Till he have caught that which him lest;⁵
And then anon will causes find,
And swearē how she is unkind,
Or false, or privy⁶ double was.
All this say I by⁷ Æneás
And Dido, and her nicē lest,⁸
That loved all too soon a guest;
Therefore I will say a provérb,
That he that fully knows the herb
May safely lay it to his eye;⁹
Withoutē dread,¹⁰ this is no lie.

When the dreamer had seen all the sight in the temple, he became desirous to know who had worked all those wonders, and in what country he was; so he resolved to go out at the wicket, in search of somebody who might tell him.

When I out at the doorēs came,
I fast aboutē me beheld;
Then saw I but a largē feld,¹¹
As far as that I mightē see,
Withoutē town, or house, or tree,
Or bush, or grass, or ired¹² land,
For all the field was but of sand,
As small as men may see it lie
In the desert of Libye;
Nor no manner créature
That is formed by Natúre,
There saw I, me to rede or wiss.¹³
"O Christ!" thought I, "that art in bliss,
From phantom and illusiōn¹⁴
Me save!" and with devotiōn
Mine eyen to the heav'n I cast.
Then was I ware at the last

¹ Glitters.

² May I possess, or use, my head well, as surely as many a cursed vice may be cloaked by fair show.

³ On account of looks and demeanour.

⁴ By simple force of his nature.

⁵ Pleases.

⁶ Secretly.

⁷ With reference to.

⁸ Foolish pleasure, caprice.

⁹ Only he who fully knows the virtues of the herb, may apply it without danger.

¹⁰ Doubt.

¹¹ Field, open country.

¹² Ploughed; Latin, "arare," Anglo-Saxon, "erean," cplough.

¹³ To advise or direct.

That, fastē by the sun on high,
As kennen might I¹⁵ with mine eye,
Me thought I saw an eagle soar,
But that it seemed muchē more¹⁶
Than I had any eagle seen;
This is as sooth as death, certáin,
It was of gold, and shone so bright,
That never saw men such a sight,
But if¹⁷ the heaven had y-won,
All new from God, another sun;
So shone the eagle's feathers bright:
And somewhat downward gan it light.¹⁸

The Second Book opens with a brief invocation of Venus and of Thought; then it proceeds:

This eagle, of which I have you told,
That shone with feathers as of gold,
Which that so high began to soar,
I gan beholdē more and more,
To see her beauty and the wonder;
But never was there dint of thunder,
Nor that thing that men callē foudre,¹⁹
That smote sometimes a town to powder,
And in his swiftē coming brenn'd,²⁰
That so swithē²¹ gan descend,
As this fowl, when that it beheld
That I a-roam was in the feld;²²
And with his grim pawēs strong,
Within his sharpē nailēs long,
Me, flying, at a swap he hent,²³
And with his sours²⁴ again up went,
Me carrying in his clawēs stark²⁵
As light as I had been a lark,
How high, I cannot tellē you,
For I came up, I wist not how.

The poet faints through bewilderment and fear; but the eagle, speaking with the voice of a man, recalls him to himself, and comforts him by the assurance that what now befalls him is for his instruction and profit. Answering the poet's unspoken inquiry whether he is not to die otherwise, or whether Jove will him stellify, the eagle says that he has been sent by Jupiter out of his "great ruth,"

"For that thou hast so truēly
So long served ententively²⁶
His blindē nephew²⁷ Cupido,
And fairē Venus alsó,
Withoutē guerdon²⁸ ever yet,
And natheless hast set thy wit
(Although that in thy head full lite²⁹ is)
To makē bookēs, songs, and ditties,
In rhyme or ellēs in cadéncé,
As thou best canst, in reverence
Of Love, and of his servants eke,

¹⁴ Vain fancy and deception.

¹⁵ As well as I might discern.

¹⁶ Larger.

¹⁷ Unless.

¹⁸ Alight, descend.

¹⁹ Thunderbolt; French, "foudre."

²⁰ Burned.

²¹ Rapidly.

²² Was roaming (on the roam) in the field.

²³ At a swoop he seized.

²⁴ Soaring ascent; a hawk was said to be "on the soar" when he mounted, "on the sours" or "souse" when he descended on the prey, and took it in flight.

²⁵ Strong.

²⁶ With attentive zeal.

²⁷ Grandson.

²⁸ Reward.

²⁹ Little.

That have his service sought, and seek,
 And pained thee to praise his art,
 Although thou haddest never part;¹
 Wherefore, all so God me bless,
 Jovis holds it great humbless,
 And virtue eke, that thou wilt make
 A-night full oft thy head to ache,
 In thy study so thou writest,
 And evermore of love enditest,
 In honour of him and praisings,
 And in his folk's furtherings,²
 And in their matter all devisest,³
 And not him nor his folk despisest,
 Although thou may'st go in the dance
 Of them that him list not advance.
 Wherefore, as I said now, y-wis,
 Jupiter well considers this;
 And also, beausire,⁴ other things;
 That is, that thou hast no tidings
 Of Lovē's folk, if they be glad,
 Nor of naught ellēs that God made;
 And not only from far country
 That no tidings come to thee,
 But of thy very neighēbours,
 That dwellen almost at thy doors,
 Thou hearest neither that nor this.
 For when thy labour all done is,
 And hast y-made thy reckonings,⁵
 Instead of rest and newē things,
 Thou go'st home to thy house anon,
 And, all so dumb as any stone,
 Thou sittest at another book,
 Till fully dazed⁶ is thy look;
 And livest thus as a hermite
 Although thine abstinence is lite."⁷

Therefore has Jove appointed the eagle to
 take the poet to the House of Fame, to do him
 some pleasure in recompense for his devotion to
 Cupid; and he will hear, says the bird,

"When we be come there as I say,
 More wondrous thingēs, dare I lay,⁸
 Of Lovē's folkē more tidings,
 Both soothē sawēs and leasings;⁹
 And morē lovēs new begun,
 And long y-served lovēs won,
 And of more lovēs casually
 That be betid,¹⁰ no man knows why,

¹ This is only one among many instances in which Chaucer disclaims the pursuits of love; and the description of his manner of life which follows is sufficient to show that the disclaimer was no mere mock-humble affectation of a gallant.

² In honour and praise of Love, and to advance the cause of Love's servants.

³ Relatest.

⁴ Fair sir, good sir.

⁵ This reference, approximately fixing the date at which the poem was composed, points clearly to Chaucer's daily work as Comptroller of the Customs—a post which he held from 1374 to 1386.

⁶ Blinded, dimmed.

⁷ Little. This is a frank enough admission that the poet was fond of good cheer; and the effect of his "little abstinence" on his corporeal appearance is humorously described in the Prologue to the Tale of Sir Thopas (page 146), where the Host compliments Chaucer on being as well shapen in the waist as himself.

⁸ Wager, bet.

⁹ True sayings and lies.

¹⁰ Happened, arisen by chance or accident.

¹¹ Love true as steel.

But as a blind man starts a hare;
 And more jollity and welfāre,
 While that they findē love of steel,¹¹
 As thinketh them, and over all weel;
 More discords, and more jealousies,
 More murmurs, and more novelties,
 And more dissimulations,
 And feigned reparations;
 And morē beardēs, in two hours,
 Withoutē razor or scissours
 Y-made,¹² than grainēs be of sands;
 And ekē more holding in hands,¹³
 And also more renovelānces¹⁴
 Of old forleten acquaintānces;¹⁵
 More lovē-days,¹⁶ and more accords,¹⁷
 Than on instruments be chords;
 And eke of lovē more exchanges
 Than ever cornēs were in granges."¹⁸

The poet can scarcely believe that, though Fame had all the pies and all the spies in a kingdom, she should hear so much; but the eagle proceeds to prove that she can.

First shalt thou hearē where she dwelleth;
 And, so as thine own bookē telleth,¹⁹
 Her palace stands, as I shall say,
 Right ev'n in middēs of the way
 Betweenē heav'n, and earth, and sea,
 That whatsoe'er in all these three
 Is spoken, privy or apert,²⁰
 The air thereto is so ovērt,²¹
 And stands eke in so just²² a place,
 That ev'ry sound must to it pace,
 Or whatso comes from any tongue,
 Be it rowned,²³ read, or sung,
 Or spoken in surety or dread,²⁴
 Certain it must thither need."²⁵

The eagle, in a long discourse, demonstrates that, as all natural things have a natural place towards which they move by natural inclination, and as sound is only broken air, so every sound must come to Fame's House, "though it were piped of a mouse"—on the same principle by which every part of a mass of water is affected by the casting in of a stone. The poet is all the while borne upward, entertained with various information by the bird; which at last cries out—

"Hold up thy head, for all is well!

¹² "To make the beard" means to befool or deceive. See note 8, page 57. Precisely the same idea is conveyed in the modern slang word "shave"—meaning a trick or fraud.

¹³ Salutations, embracings.

¹⁴ Renewings.

¹⁵ Broken-off acquaintanceships.

¹⁶ See note 7, page 20.

¹⁷ Reconciliations, agreements.

¹⁸ Barns, granaries.

¹⁹ If this reference is to any book of Chaucer's in which the House of Fame was mentioned, the book has not come down to us. It has been reasonably supposed, however, that Chaucer means by "his own book" Ovid's "Metamorphoses," of which he was evidently very fond; and in the twelfth book of that poem the Temple of Fame is described.

²⁰ Secretly or openly.

²¹ The air (between the place where anything is spoken, and the House of Fame) is so open, so free from obstruction.

²² Exactly calculated or suitable.

²³ Whispered.

²⁴ In confidence or in doubt.

²⁵ It must needs go thither.

Saint Julian, lo! bon hostel!¹
 See here the House of Famē, lo!
 May'st thou not hearē that I do?"
 "What?" quoth I. "The greatē soun',"
 Quoth he, "that rumbleth up and down
 In Famē's Housē, full of tidings,
 Both of fair speech and of chidings,
 And of false and sooth compounded;²
 Harken well; it is not rownd.³
 Hearest thou not the greatē swough?"⁴
 "Yes, pardie!" quoth I, "well enough."
 "And what sound is it like?" quoth he;
 "Peter! the beating of the sea,"
 Quoth I, "against the rockēs hollow,
 When tempests do the shippēs swallow.
 And let a man stand, out of doubt,
 A milē thence, and hear it rout.⁵
 Or ellēs like the last humblīng⁶
 After the clap of a thund'ring,
 When Jovis hath the air y-beat;
 But it doth me for fearē sweat."⁷
 "Nay, dread thee not thereof," quoth he;
 "It is nothing will bitē thee,
 Thou shalt no harmē have, truly."
 And with that word both he and I
 As nigh the place arrived were,
 As men might castē with a spear.
 I wist not how, but in a street
 He set me fair upon my feet,
 And saidē: "Walkē forth apace,
 And take thine adventūre or case,⁸
 That thou shalt find in Famē's place."
 "Now," quoth I, "while we have space
 To speak, ere that I go from thee,
 For the love of God, as tellē me,
 In sooth, that I will of thee lear,⁹
 If this noisē that I hear
 Be, as I have heard thee tell,
 Of folk that down in earthē dwell,
 And cometh here in the same wise
 As I thee heard, ere this, devise?
 And that there living body n' is¹⁰
 In all that house that yonder is,
 That maketh all this loudē fare?"¹¹
 "No," answered he, "by Saint Clare,
 And all so wisly God rede me;¹²
 But one thing I will warnē thee,
 Of the which thou wilt have wonder.
 Lo! to the House of Famē yonder,
 Thou know'st how cometh ev'ry speech;
 It needeth not thee eft¹³ to teach.
 But understand now right well this;
 When any speech y-comen is
 Up to the palace, anon right
 It waxeth like the samē wight¹⁴

¹ Saint Julian was the patron of hospitality; so the Franklin, in the Prologue to The Canterbury Tales, is said to be "Saint Julian in his country," for his open house and liberal cheer. The eagle, at sight of the House of Fame, cries out "bon hostel!"—"a fair lodging, a glorious house, by St Julian!"

² Compounded, mingled.

⁴ Rushing, confused sound.

⁶ Humming; dull low distant noise.

⁷ It makes me sweat for fear.

⁸ Take thy chance of what may befall.

⁹ Learn.

¹¹ Hubbub, ado.

¹³ Again.

³ Whispered.

⁵ Roar.

¹⁰ Is not.

¹² So surely God guide me.

Which that the word in earthē spake,
 Be he cloth'd in red or black;
 And so weareth his likenēss,
 And speaks the word, that thou wilt guess¹⁵
 That it the samē body be,
 Whether man or woman, he or she.
 And is not this a wondrous thing?"
 "Yes," quoth I then, "by Heaven's king!"
 And with this word, "Farewell," quoth he,
 And here I will abidē¹⁶ thee,
 And God of Heaven send thee grace
 Some good to learen⁹ in this place."
 And I of him took leave anon,
 And gan forth to the palace go'n.

At the opening of the Third Book, Chaucer briefly invokes Apollo's guidance, and entreats him, because "the rhyme is light and lewd," to "make it somewhat agreeable, though some verse fail in a syllable." If the god answers the prayer, the poet promises to kiss the next laurel-tree¹⁷ he sees; and he proceeds:

When I was from this eagle gone,
 I gan behold upon this place;
 And certain, ere I farther pace,
 I will you all the shape devise¹⁸
 Of house and city; and all the wise
 How I gan to this place approach,
 That stood upon so high a roche,¹⁹
 Higher standeth none in Spain;
 But up I climb'd with muchē pain,
 And though to climbē grieved me,²⁰
 Yet I ententive²¹ was to see,
 And for to porē²² wondrous low,
 If I could any wisē know
 What manner stone this rockē was,
 For it was like a thing of glass,
 But that it shonē full more clear;
 But of what congealed mattēre
 It was, I wist not readilý,
 But at the last espiēd I,
 And found that it was ev'ry deal²³
 A rock of ice, and not of steel.
 Thought I, "By Saint Thomas of Kent,²⁴
 This were a feeble fundament²⁵
 To builden on²⁶ a place so high;
 He ought him lite²⁷ to glorify
 That hereon built, God so me save!"
 Then saw I all the half y-grave²⁸
 With famous folkē's namēs fele,²⁹
 That haddē been in muchē weal,³⁰
 And their famēs wide y-blow.
 But well unnethēs³¹ might I know
 Any letters for to read
 Their namēs by; for out of dread³²

¹⁴ It takes the semblance of the same person.

¹⁵ Fancy.

¹⁶ Wait for.

¹⁷ The tree sacred to Apollo. See note 26, page 218.

¹⁸ Describe.

¹⁹ French, "roche," a rock.

²⁰ Annoyed me, cost me a painful effort.

²¹ Attentive.

²² Gaze closely.

²³ Entirely, in every part.

²⁴ Thomas à Beckett, whose shrine was at Canterbury.

²⁵ Foundation.

²⁶ On which to build.

²⁷ Little.

²⁸ The half or side of the rock which was towards the poet, was inscribed with, &c.

²⁹ Many.

³⁰ Happiness, good fortune.

³¹ Scarcely.

³² Doubt.

They were almost off thawed so,
That of the letters one or two
Were molt¹ away of ev'ry name,
So unfamous was wox their fame;²
But men say, "What may ever last?"
Then gan I in my heart to cast³
That they were molt away for heat,
And not away with stormes beat;
For on the other side I sey⁴
Of this hill, that northward lay,
How it was written full of names
Of folkē that had greatē fames
Of oldē times, and yet they were
As fresh as men had writ them there
The selfē⁵ day, right ere that hour
That I upon them gan to pore.
But well I wistē what it made;⁶
It was conserved with the shade,
All the writing which I sigh,⁴
Of a castle that stood on high;
And stood eke on so cold a place,
That heat might it not deface.⁷

Then gan I on this hill to go'n,
And found upon the cop a won,⁸
That all the men that be alive
Have not the cunning to describe⁹
The beauty of that ilkē place,
Nor couldē castē no compass¹⁰
Such another for to make,
That might of beauty be its make,¹¹
Nor one so wondrously y-wrought,
That it astonieth yet my thought,
And maketh all my wit to swink,¹²
Upon this castle for to think;
So that the greatē beauty,
Cast,¹³ craft, and curiosity,
Ne can I not to you devise;¹⁴
My wittē may me not suffice.
But natheless all the substānce
I have yet in my remembrānce;
For why, me thoughtē, by Saint Gile,
Allē was of stone of beryle,
Bothē the castle and the tow'r,
And eke the hall, and ev'ry bow'r,¹⁵

¹ Molten, melted.

² So obscure had they become.

³ Consider, conjecture.

⁴ Saw.

⁵ Self-same. ⁶ Meant.

⁷ Injure, destroy.

⁸ Upon the summit (German, "Kopf," the head) a dwelling or house.

⁹ The skill, or ability, to describe.

¹⁰ Hit upon no contrivance.

¹¹ Equal, match.

¹² Labour.

¹³ Ingenuity.

¹⁴ Tell.

¹⁵ Chamber.

¹⁶ Contrivances.

¹⁷ Turrets, watch-towers.

¹⁸ Habitations, apartments; or niches.

¹⁹ Tellers of stories; reciters of brave feats or "gests."

²⁰ Mirth.

²¹ The celebrated Greek bard and citharist, who, in the seventh century before Christ, lived at the court of Periander, tyrant of Corinth. The story of his preservation by the dolphin, when the covetous sailors forced him to leap into the sea, is well known.

²² Chiron the Centaur, renowned for skill in music and the arts, which he owed to the teaching of Apollo and Artemis. He became in turn the instructor of Peleus, Achilles, and other descendants of Æacus; hence he is called "Æacides"—because tutor to the Æacides, and thus, so to speak, of that "family."

²³ He is the subject of a ballad given in "Percy's Reliques," where we are told that

"Glasgerion was a king's own son,
And a harper he was good;

Withoutē pieces or joinings,
But many subtille compassings,¹⁶
As barbicans¹⁷ and pinnacles,
Imageries and tabernacles,
I saw; and eke full of windōwa,
As flakēs fall in greatē snows.
And eke in each of the pinnacles
Werē sundry habitacles,¹⁸
In which stoodē, all without,
Full the castle all about,
Of all manner of minstrales
And gestiours,¹⁹ that tellē tales
Both of weeping and of game,²⁰
Of all that longeth unto Fame.

There heard I play upon a harp,
That sounded bothē well and sharp,
Him, Orphēus, full craftily;
And on this sidē fastē by
Sattē the harper Ariōn,²¹
And eke Æacides Chirōn;²²
And other harpers many a one,
And the great Glasgerion;²³
And smallē harpers, with their gleees,²⁴
Satten under them in sees,²⁵
And gan on them upwārd to gape,
And counterfeit them as an ape,
Or as craft counterfeiteth kind.²⁶
Then saw I standing them behind,
Afar from them, all by themselves,
Many thousand timēs twelve,
That madē loudē minstrelsie
In cornmuse²⁷ and eke in shawmies,²⁸
And in many another pipe,
That craftily began to pipe,
Both in dulcet²⁹ and in reed,
That be at feastēs with the bride.
And many a flute and liting horn,
And pipēs made of greenē corn,
As have these little herdē-grooms,³⁰
That keepē beastēs in the brooms.
There saw I then Dan Citherus,
And of Athēns Dan Pronomus,³¹
And Marsyas³² that lost his skin,
Both in the face, body, and chin,

He harped in the king's chamber,
Where cup and candle stood."

²⁴ Musical instruments.

²⁵ Seats.

²⁶ As art counterfeits nature.

²⁷ Bagpipe; French, "cornemuse."

²⁸ Shalms or psalteries; an instrument resembling a harp.

²⁹ A kind of pipe, probably corresponding with the "dulcimer;" the idea of sweet—French, "doux;" Latin, "dulcis"—is at the root of both words.

³⁰ Shepherd-boys, herd-lads.

³¹ In the early printed editions of Chaucer, the two names are "Citherus" and "Proserus;" in the manuscript which Mr Bell followed (No. 16 in the Fairfax collection) they are "Atileris" and "Pseustis." But neither alternative gives more than the slightest clue to identification. "Citherus" has been retained in the text; it may have been employed as an appellative of Apollo, derived from "cithara," the instrument on which he played; and it is not easy to suggest a better substitute for it than "Clonas"—an early Greek poet and musician who flourished six hundred years before Christ. For "Proserus," however, has been substituted "Pronomus," the name of a celebrated Grecian player on the pipe, who taught Alcibiades the flute, and who therefore, although Theban by birth, might naturally be said by the poet to be "of Athens."

³² The Phrygian, who, having found the flute of Athena, which played of itself most exquisite music,

For that he would envyen, lo !
 To pipe better than Apolló.
 There saw I famous, old and young,
 Pipers of allē Dutchē tongue,¹
 To learnē love-dances and springs,
 Reyēs,² and these strangē things.
 Then saw I in another place,
 Standing in a largē space,
 Of them that makē bloody soun',³
 In trumpet, beam,⁴ and clarioun ;
 For in fight and blood-sheddings
 Is usēd gladly clarionings.
 There heard I trumpē Messenús,⁵
 Of whom speaketh Virgiliús.⁶
 There heard I Joab trump also,⁷
 Theodamas,⁸ and other mo',
 And all that used clarion
 In Catalogne and Aragon,
 That in their timēs famous were
 To learnē, saw I trumpē there.
 There saw I sit in other sees,
 Playing upon sundry glees,
 Whichē that I cannot neven,⁹
 More than starrēs be in heaven ;
 Of which I will not now rhyme,
 For ease of you, and loss of time :
 For timē lost, this knowē ye,
 By no way may recover'd be.
 There saw I play jongelours,¹⁰
 Magiciāns, and tregetours,¹¹
 And Pythonesses,¹² charmeresses,
 And old witches, and sorceresses,
 That use exorcisiōns,¹³
 And eke subfumigatiōns ;
 And clerkēs¹⁴ eke, which knowē well
 All this magic naturel,
 That craftily do their intents

challenged Apollo to a contest, the victor in which was to do with the vanquished as he pleased. Marsyas was beaten, and Apollo flayed him alive.

¹ The German (Deutsche) language, in Chaucer's time, had not undergone that marked literary division which was largely accomplished through the influence of the works of Luther and the other Reformers. Even now, the flute is the favourite musical instrument of the Fatherland ; and the devotion of the Germans to poetry and music has been celebrated since the days of Tacitus.

² A kind of dance, or song to be accompanied with dancing.

³ Martial sound, accompanying sanguinary strife.

⁴ Horn, trumpet ; Anglo-Saxon, "bema."

⁵ Misenus, son of Æolus, the companion and trumpeter of Æneas, was drowned near the Campanian headland called Misenum after his name.

⁶ Æneid, vi. 162 *et seqq.*

⁷ Joab's fame as a trumpeter is founded on two verses in 2 Samuel (ii. 28, xx. 22), where we are told that he "blew a trumpet," which all the people of Israel obeyed, in the one case desisting from a pursuit, in the other raising a siege.

⁸ Theodamas or Thiodamas, king of the Dryopes, who plays a prominent part in the tenth book of Statius' "Thebaid." Both he and Joab are also mentioned as great trumpeters in The Merchant's Tale, page 109.

⁹ Name.

¹⁰ Jugglers ; French, "jongleur."

¹¹ For explanation of this word, see note 11, page 126.

¹² Women who, like the Pythia in Apollo's temple at Delphi, were possessed with a spirit of divination or prophecy. The barbarous Latin form of the word was "Pythonissa" or "Phitonissa." See note 10, page 85.

¹³ A ceremony employed to drive away evil spirits by burning incense ; the practice of smoking cattle, corn, &c., has not died out in some country districts.

¹⁴ Scholars.

To make, in certain ascendēts,¹⁵
 Images, lo ! through which magic
 To make a man be whole or sick.
 There saw I the queen Medeā,¹⁶
 And Circeas¹⁷ eke, and Calypsā.¹⁸
 There saw I Hermes Ballenus,¹⁹
 Limote,²⁰ and eke Simon Magūs.²¹
 There saw I, and knew by name,
 That by such art do men have fame.
 There saw I Collē Tregetour²²
 Upon a table of sycamore
 Play an uncouth²³ thing to tell ;
 I saw him carry a windmell
 Under a walnut shell.
 Why should I makē longer tale
 Of all the people I there say,²⁴
 From hence even to doomēday ?
 When I had all this folk behold,
 And found me loose, and not y-hold,²⁵
 And I had mused longē while
 Upon these wallēs of beryle,
 That shone lighter than any glass,
 And madē well more²⁶ than it was
 To seemen ev'rything, y-wis,
 As kindly²⁷ thing of Fame it is ;
 I gan forth roam until I fand²⁸
 The castle-gate on my right hand,
 Which all so well y-carven was,
 That never such another n' as ;²⁹
 And yet it was by Adventūre
 Y-wrought, and not by subtile cure.³⁰
 It needeth not you more to tell,
 To makē you too longē dwell,
 Of these gatēs' flourishing,
 Nor of compasses,³¹ nor carvings,
 Nor how they had in masonries,
 As corbets,³² full of imageries.

¹⁵ Under certain planetary influences. The next lines recall the alleged malpractices of witches, who tortured little images of wax, in the design of causing the same torments to the person represented—or, *vice versa*, treated these images for the cure of hurts or sickness.

¹⁶ Celebrated for her magical power, through which she restore to youth Æson, the father of Jason ; and caused the death of Jason's wife, Creusa, by sending her a poisoned garment which consumed her to ashes.

¹⁷ The sorceress Circe, who changed the companions of Ulysses into swine.

¹⁸ Calypso, on whose island of Ogygia Ulysses was wrecked. The goddess promised the hero immortality if he remained with her ; but he refused, and, after a detention of seven years, she had to let him go.

¹⁹ This is supposed to mean Hermes Trismegistus (of whom see note 23, page 185) ; but the explanation of the word "Balenus" is not quite obvious. The god Hermes of the Greeks (Mercurius of the Romans) had the surname "Cyllenius," from the mountain where he was born—Mount Cyllene, in Arcadia ; and the alteration into "Balenus" would be quite within the range of a copyist's capabilities, while we find in the mythological character of Hermes enough to warrant his being classed with jugglers and magicians.

²⁰ Limote and Collē Tregetour seem to have been famous sorcerers or jugglers, but nothing is now known of either.

²¹ Of whom we read in Acts viii. 9, *et seqq.*

²² Strange, rare.

²³ Saw.

²⁴ At liberty and unrestrained.

²⁵ Much greater.

²⁶ Natural ; it is in the nature of Fame to exaggerate everything.

²⁷ Found.

²⁸ Was (with negative particle prefixed).

²⁹ And yet it was fashioned by Chance, not by care.

³⁰ Devices.

³¹ The corbels, or capitals whence the arches spring

But, Lord! so fair it was to shew,
 For it was all with gold behew.¹
 But in I went, and that anon;
 There met I crying many a one
 "A largess! largess!² hold up well!
 God save the Lady of this pell,³
 Our owen gentle Lady Fame,
 And them that will to havē name
 Of us!" Thus heard I cryen all,
 And fast they came out of the hall,
 And shookē nobles and sterlings,⁴
 And some y-crowned were as kings,
 With crownēs wrought full of lozēges;
 And many ribands, and many fringes,
 Were on their clothēs truēly.
 Then at the last espiēd I
 That pursuivantēs and herauds,⁵
 That cry richē folkē's lauds,⁶
 They weren all; and ev'ry man
 Of them, as I you tellē can,
 Had on him throwen a vestūre
 Which that men call a coat-armūre,⁷
 Embroidered wondrously rich,
 As though there werē naught y-lich;⁸
 But naught will I, so may I thrive,
 Be aboutē to describe⁹
 All these armēs that there were,
 That they thus on their coatēs bare,
 For it to me were impossible;
 Men might make of them a bible
 Twenty footē thick, I trow.
 For, certain, whoso couldē know
 Might there all the armēs see'n
 Of famous folk that havē been
 In Afric', Europe, and Asie,
 Since first began the chivalry.

Lo! how should I now tell all this?
 Nor of the hall eke what need is
 To tellē you that ev'ry wall
 Of it, and floor, and roof, and all,
 Was plated half a footē thick
 Of gold, and that was nothing wick',¹⁰
 But for to prove in allē wise
 As fine as ducat of Venise,¹¹
 Of which too little in my pouch is?
 And they were set as thick of nouches¹²
 Fine, of the finest stonēs fair,
 That men read in the Lapidaire,¹³
 As grasses growen in a mead.
 But it were all too long to read¹⁴
 The namēs; and therefore I pass.
 But in this rich and lusty place,
 That Famē's Hall y-called was,
 Full muchē press of folk there n' as,¹⁵

Nor crowding for too muchē press.
 But all on high, above a dais,
 Set on a see¹⁶ imperial,
 That madē was of ruby all,
 Which that carbuncle is y-call'd,
 I saw perpetually install'd
 A femininē creatūre;
 That never formed by Nature
 Was such another thing y-sey.¹⁷
 For altherfirstē,¹⁸ sooth to say,
 Me thoughtē that she was so lite,¹⁹
 That the length of a cubite
 Was longer than she seem'd to be;
 But thus soon in a whilē she
 Herself then wonderfully stretch'd,
 That with her feet the earth she reach'd,
 And with her head she touched heaven,
 Where as shine the starrēs seven.²⁰
 And thereto²¹ eke, as to my wit,
 I saw a greater wonder yet,
 Upon her eyen to behold;
 But certes I them never told.
 For as fele eyen²² haddē she,
 As feathers upon fowlēs be,
 Or were on the beastēs four
 That Goddē's thronē gan honoūre,
 As John writ in th' Apocalypse.²³
 Her hair, that oundy was and crips,²⁴
 As burnish'd gold it shone to see;
 And, sooth to tellen, also she
 Had all so fele upstanding ears,
 And tonguēs, as on beasts be hairs;
 And on her feet waxen saw I
 Partridges' wingēs readilī.²⁵
 But, Lord! the pierrie²⁶ and richēss
 I saw sitting on this goddēss,
 And the heavenly melody
 Of songēs full of harmony,
 I heard about her throne y-sung,
 That all the palace wallēs rung!
 (So sung the mighty Musē, she
 That called is Calliopē,
 And her eight sisteren²⁷ eke,
 That in their faces seemē meek);
 And evermore eternallī
 They sang of Fame as then heard I:
 "Heried²⁸ be thou and thy name,
 Goddess of Renown and Fame!"
 Then was I ware, lo! at the last,
 As I mine eyen gan upcast,
 That this ilkē noble queen
 On her shoulders gan sustene²⁹
 Both the armēs, and the name
 Of those that haddē largē fame;

in a Gothic building; they were often carved with fantastic figures and devices.

¹ Behued, coloured.

² The cry with which heralds and pursuivants at a tournament acknowledged the gifts or largesses of the knights whose achievements they celebrated.

³ Palace, house.

⁴ Sterling coins; not "luxemburges" (see note 27, page 156), but stamped and authorised money.

⁵ Heralds.

⁶ Praises.

⁷ The sleeveless coat or "tabard," on which the arms of the wearer or his lord were emblazoned.

⁸ Nothing like it.

⁹ Concern myself with describing.

¹⁰ For "wicked;" counterfeit.

¹¹ In whatever way it might be proved or tested, it would be found as fine as a Venetian ducat.

¹² Bosses, ornaments.

¹³ A treatise on precious stones.

¹⁴ Declare.

¹⁵ Was not.

¹⁶ Seat.

See note 1, page 386.

¹⁷ Seen.

¹⁸ First of all.

¹⁹ Little.

²⁰ Septentrion; the Great Bear or Northern Wain, which in this country appears to be at the top of heaven.

²¹ Moreover.

²² As many eyes.

²³ Revelations iv. 6.

²⁴ Wavy and crisp; "oundy" is the French "ondoyé," from "ondoyer," to undulate or wave.

²⁵ Denoting swiftness.

²⁶ Gems, jewellery.

²⁷ Sisters.

²⁸ Praised.

²⁹ Sustain.

Alexander, and Herculeſs,
 That with a ſhirt his life leſe.¹
 Thus found I ſitting this goddeſs,
 In noble honour and richéſs ;
 Of which I ſtint² a while now,
 Of other things to tellé you.

Then ſaw I ſtand on either ſide,
 Straight down unto the doorés wide,
 From the dais, many a pillére
 Of metal, that ſhone not full clear ;
 But though they were of no richéſs,
 Yet were they made for great nobléſs,
 And in them greaté ſenténcé.³
 And folk of digné⁴ reverence,
 Of which I will you tellé fand,⁵
 Upon the pillars ſaw I ſtand.
 Altherfiſt, lo ! there I ſigh⁶
 Upon a pillar ſtand on high,
 That was of lead and iron fine,
 Him of the ſecté Saturnine,⁷
 The Hebrew Joſephus the old,
 That of Jewes' geſtés⁸ told ;
 And he bare on his ſhoulders high
 All the fame up of Jewry.
 And by him ſtooden other ſeven,
 Full wiſe and worthy for to neven,⁹
 To help him bearen up the charge,¹⁰
 It was ſo heavy and ſo large.
 And, for they writen of battailes,
 As well as other old marváiles,
 Therefore was, lo ! this pillére,
 Of which that I you tellé here,
 Of lead and iron both, y-wis ;
 For iron Marté's metal is,¹¹
 Which that god is of bataille ;
 And eke the lead, withouté fail,
 Is, lo ! the metal of Saturn,
 That hath full largé wheel¹² to turn.
 Then ſtoodé forth, on either row,
 Of them which I couldé know,
 Though I them not by order tell,
 To maké you too longé dwell.
 Theſe, of the which I gin you read,
 There ſaw I ſtanden, out of dread,
 Upon an iron pillar ſtrong,
 That painted was all endélong¹³
 With tiger's blood in ev'ry place,
 The Tholoſan that highté Stace,¹⁴

¹ Lost his life ; with the poisoned ſhirt of Neſſus, ſent to him by the jealous Dejanira.

² Refrain (from ſpeaking).

³ Significance ; that is, in the appropriatenéſs of the metal of which they are compoſed to the character of the author repreſented.

⁴ Worthy, lofty.

⁵ I will try to tell you.

⁶ Saw.

⁷ Of the Saturnine ſchool ; ſo called becauſe his hiſtory of the Jewiſh wars narrated many horrors, cruelties, and ſufferings, over which Saturn was the preſiding déity. See note 5, page 41.

⁸ Feats, deeds of bravery.

⁹ Name.

¹⁰ Burden.

¹¹ Compare the account of the "bodies ſeven" given by the Canon's Yeoman (p. 180) :

"Sol gold is, and Luna ſilver we threpe ;
 Mars iron, Mercury quickſilver we clepe ;
 Saturnus lead, and Jupiter is tin,
 And Venus copper, by my father's kin."

¹² Orbit.

¹³ From top to bottom ; throughout.

¹⁴ Statius is called a "Tholoſan," becauſe by ſome,

That bare of Thebes up the name
 Upon his ſhoulders, and the fame
 Also of cruel Achilléſs.
 And by him ſtood, withouté leaſe,¹⁵
 Full wondrous high on a pillére
 Of iron, he, the great Homére ;
 And with him Dares and Dytus,¹⁶
 Before, and eke he, Lollius,¹⁷
 And Guido eke de Colempnia,¹⁸
 And Engliſh Gaufrid¹⁹ eke, y-wis.
 And each of theſe, as I have joy,
 Was buſy for to bear up Troy ;
 So heavy thereof was the fame,
 That for to bear it was no game.
 But yet I gan full well eſpy,
 Betwixt them was a little envý.
 One ſaid that Homer madé lies,
 Feigning in his poetries,
 And was to the Greeks favouráble ;
 Therefore held he it but a fable.
 Then ſaw I ſtand on a pillére
 That was of tinned iron clear,
 Him, the Latin poet, Virgile,
 That borne hath up a longé while
 The fame of pious Æneas.
 And next him on a pillar was
 Of copper, Venus' clerk Ovide,
 That hath y-sowen wondrous wide
 The greaté god of Lové's fame.
 And there he bare up well his name
 Upon this pillar all ſo high,
 As I might ſee it with mine eye ;
 For why ? this hall whereof I read
 Was waxen in height, and length, and bread,²⁰
 Well moré by a thouſand deal²¹
 Than it was erſt, that ſaw I weel.
 Then ſaw I on a pillar by,
 Of iron wrought full ſternély,
 The greaté poet, Dan Lucan,
 That on his ſhoulders bare up than,
 As high as that I might it ſee,
 The fame of Julius and Pompéy ;²²
 And by him ſtood all thoſe clerks
 That write of Romé's mighty works,
 That if I would their namés tell,
 All too longé muſt I dwell.
 And next him on a pillar ſtood
 Of ſulphur, like as he were wood,²³

among them Dante, he was believed to have been a native of Tolosa, now Toulouse. He wrote the "Thebais," in twelve books, and the "Achilleis," of which only two were finiſhed.

¹⁵ Without leaſing or falſehood ; truly.

¹⁶ Dares Phrygius and Dictys Cretensis were the names attached to hiſtories of the Trojan War pretended to have been written immediately after the fall of Troy.

¹⁷ The unrecogniſable author whom Chaucer profeſſes to follow in his "Troilus and Cressida," and who has been thought to mean Boccaccio. See page 248.

¹⁸ Guido de Colonna, or de Colempnia, a native of Meſſina, who lived about the end of the thirteenth century, and wrote in Latin proſe a hiſtory including the war of Troy.

¹⁹ Geoffrey of Monmouth, who drew from Troy the original of the Britiſh race. See Spenser's "Faerie Queen," book ii. canto x. pages 395-6.

²⁰ Breadth.

²¹ Times.

²² In his "Pharsalia," a poem in ten books, recounting the incidents of the war between Cæſar and Pompey.

²³ Mad.

Dan Claudian,¹ the sooth to tell,
That bare up all the fame of hell,
Of Pluto, and of Proserpine,
That queen is of the darkë pine.²
Why should I tellë more of this?
The hall was allë full, y-wis,
Of them that writen oldë gesta,³
As be on treës rookës' nests;
But it a full confus'd mattëre
Were all these gestës for to hear,
That they of write,⁴ and how they hight.

But while that I beheld this sight,
I heard a noise approachë blive,⁵
That far'd⁶ as bees do in a hive,
Against their time of outflyng;
Right such a manner murmuring,
For all the world, it seem'd to me.
Then gan I look about, and see
That there came entering the hall
A right great company withal,
And that of sundry regiöns,
Of all kinds and conditions
That dwell in earth under the moon,
Both poor and rich; and all so soon
As they were come into the hall,
They gan adown on knees to fall,
Before this ilkë⁷ noble queen,
And saidë, "Grant us, Lady sheen,⁸
Each of us of thy grace a boon."⁹
And some of them she granted soon,
And some she warnëd¹⁰ well and fair,
And some she granted the contrair¹¹
Of their asking utterly;
But this I say you truëly,
What that her causë was, I n'ist;¹²
For of these folk full well I wist,
They haddë good fame each deserved,
Although they werë diversely served.
Right as her sister, Dame Fortune,
Is wont to serven in commüne.¹³

Now hearken how she gan to pay
Them that gan of her grace to pray;
And right, lo! all this company
Saidë sooth,¹⁴ and not a lie.
"Madámë," thus quoth they, "we be
Folk that here beseechë thee
That thou grant us now good fame,
And let our workës have good name.
In full recompensatioun
Of good work, give us good renown!"
"I warn¹⁵ it you," quoth she anon;
"Ye get of me good famë none,
By God! and therefore go your way."
"Alas," quoth they, "and well-away!
Tell us what may your causë be."
"For that it list¹⁶ me not," quoth she,

"No wight shall speak of you, y-wis,
Good nor harm, nor that nor this."

And with that word she gan to call
Her messenger, that was in hall,
And bade that he should fastë go'n,
Upon pain to be blind anon,
For Æolus, the god of wind;
"In Thracë there ye shall him find,
And bid him bring his clarioün,
That is full dïverse of his soun',
And it is called Clearë Laud,
With which he wont is to heraud¹⁷
Them that me list y-praised be,
And also bid him how that he
Bring eke his other clarioün,
That hight Slander in ev'ry town,
With which he wont is to diffame¹⁸
Them that me list, and do them shame."
This messenger gan fastë go'n,
And found where, in a cave of stone,
In a country that hightë Thrace,
This Æolus, with hardë grace,¹⁹
Heldë the windës in distress,²⁰
And gan them under him to press,
That they began as bears to roar,
He bound and pressed them so sore.
This messenger gan fast to cry,
"Rise up," quoth he, "and fast thee hie,
Until thou at my Lady be,
And take thy clarions eke with thee,
And speed thee forth." And he anon
Took to him one that hight Tritón,²¹
His clarions to bearë tho,²²
And let a certain windë go,
That blew so hideously and high,
That it leftë not a sky²³
In all the welkin²⁴ long and broad.
This Æolus nowhere abode²⁵
Till he was come to Famë's feet,
And eke the man that Triton hete,²⁶
And there he stood as still as stone.

And therewithal there came anon
Another hugë company
Of goodë folk, and gan to cry,
"Lady, grant us goodë fame,
And let our workës have that name,
Now in honoür of gentleness;
And all so God your soulë bless;
For we have well deserved it,
Therefore is right we be well quit."²⁷
"As thrive I," quoth she, "ye shall fail;
Good workës shall you not avail
To have of me good fame as now;
But, wot ye what, I grantë you
That ye shall have a shrewdë²⁸ fame,
And wicked los, and worsë name,

¹ Claudian of Alexandria, "the most modern of the ancient poets," who lived some three centuries after Christ, and among other works wrote three books on "The Rape of Proserpine."

² The dark (realm of) punishment or pain.

³ Histories, tales of great deeds.

⁴ Of which they write.

⁵ Quickly.

⁶ Went.

⁷ Same.

⁸ Bright, lovely.

⁹ A favour.

¹⁰ Refused.

¹¹ Contrary.

¹² Wist not, know not.

¹³ Commonly, usually.

¹⁴ Truth.

¹⁵ Refuse.

¹⁶ Pleases.

¹⁷ Proclaim or herald the praises of.

¹⁸ Disgrace, disparage.

¹⁹ Evil favour attend him!

²⁰ Constraint.

²¹ Triton was a son of Poseidon or Neptune, and represented usually as blowing a trumpet made of a conch or shell; he is therefore introduced by Chaucer as the squire of Æolus.

²² Then.

²³ Cloud; Anglo-Saxon, "scua;" Greek, *σκια*.

²⁴ Sky, heaven.

²⁵ Tarried, delayed.

²⁶ Is called.

²⁷ Requited.

²⁸ Evil, cursed.

Though ye good los¹ have well deserv'd;
 Now go your way, for ye be serv'd.
 And now, Dan Æolus," quoth she,
 "Take forth thy trump anon, let see,
 That is y-called Slander light,
 And blow their los, that ev'ry wight
 Speak of them harm and shrewdness,²
 Instead of good and worthiness;
 For thou shalt trump all the contrair
 Of that they have done, well and fair."
 Alas! thought I, what adventures³
 Have these sorry creatures,
 That they, amonge all the press,
 Should thus be shamed guiltless?
 But what! it muste neede be.
 What did this Æolus, but he
 Took out his blacke trump of brass,
 That fouler than the Devil was,
 And gan this trumpet for to blow,
 As all the world 't would overthrow.
 Throughout every regioún
 Went this foul trumpet's soun',
 As swift as pellet out of gun
 When fire is in the powder run.⁴
 And such a smoke gan out wend,⁵
 Out of this foul trumpet's end,
 Black, blue, greenish, swart,⁶ and red,
 As doth when that men melt lead,
 Lo! all on high from the tewell;⁷
 And thereto⁸ one thing saw I well,
 That the farther that it ran,
 The greater waxen it began,
 As doth the river from a well,⁹
 And it stank as the pit of hell.
 Alas! thus was their shame y-rung,
 And guiltless, on ev'ry tongue.
 Then came the thirde company,
 And gan up to the dais to hie,¹⁰
 And down on knees they fell anon,
 And said, "We be ev'ry one
 Folk that have full truely
 Deserved fame right fully,
 And pray you that it may be know
 Right as it is, and forth y-blow."
 "I grant, quoth she, "for me list
 That now your good works be wist;
 And yet ye shall have better los,
 In despite of all your foes,
 Than worthy¹¹ is, and that anon.
 Let now," quoth she, "thy trumpet go'n,
 Thou Æolus, that is so black,
 And out thine other trumpet take,
 That highte Laud, and blow it so
 That through the world their fame may go,
 Easily and not too fast,
 That it be knowen at the last."
 "Full gladly, Lady mine," he said;
 And out his trump of gold he braid¹²

Anon, and set it to his mouth,
 And blew it east, and west, and south,
 And north, as loud as any thunder,
 That ev'ry wight had of it wonder,
 So broad it ran ere that it stent.¹³
 And certes all the breath that went
 Out of his trumpet's mouth small'd
 As¹⁴ men a pot of balm held
 Among a basket full of roses;
 This favour did he to their loses.¹⁵
 And right with this I gan espy
 Where came the fourth company.
 But certain they were wondrous few;
 And gan to standen in a row,¹⁶
 And said, "Certes, Lady bright,
 We have done well with all our might,
 But we not keep¹⁷ to have fame;
 Hide our workes and our name,
 For Godd's love! for certes we
 Have surely done it for bounty,¹⁸
 And for no manner other thing."
 "I grant you all your asking,"
 Quoth she; "let your workes be dead."

With that I turn'd about my head,
 And saw anon the fifth rout,¹⁹
 That to this Lady gan to lout,²⁰
 And down on knees anon to fall;
 And to her then besoughten all
 To hide their good workes eke,
 And said, they gave not a leak²¹
 For no fame, nor such renown;
 For they for contemplatioun
 And Godd's love had y-wrought,
 Nor of fame would they have aught.
 "What!" quoth she, "and be ye wood?
 And weene ye²² for to do good,
 And for to have of that no fame?
 Have ye despite²³ to have my name?
 Nay, ye shall lie every one!
 Blow thy trump, and that anon,"
 Quoth she, "thou Æolus, I hote,²⁴
 And ring these folk's works by note,
 That all the world may of it hear."
 And he gan blow their los so clear
 Within his golden clarion,
 That through the world went the soun',
 All so kindly, and so soft,
 That their fame was blown aloft.

And then came the sixth company,
 And gunnen fast on Fame to cry;
 Right verily in this mannere
 They said; "Mercy, Lady dear!
 To tell certain as it is,
 We have done neither that nor this,
 But idle all our life hath be;²⁵
 But natheless yet praye we
 That we may have as good a fame,
 And great renown, and knowen²⁶ name,

¹ Reputation. See note 10, page 155.
² Wickedness, malice.
³ What (evil) fortunes.
⁴ As swift as ball out of gun or cannon, when fire is communicated to the powder.
⁵ Proceed.
⁶ Black; German, "schwarz."
⁷ The pipe, chimney, of the furnace; French "tuyau." In the Prologue to The Canterbury Tales, the Monk's head is described as steaming like a lead furnace.

⁸ Also.
⁹ Fountain.
¹⁰ Hasten.
¹¹ Merited.
¹² Pulled forth.
¹³ Ere the sound ceased.
¹⁴ As if.
¹⁵ Reputations.
¹⁶ Row.
¹⁷ Care not.
¹⁸ Goodness, virtue.
¹⁹ Company.
²⁰ Bow down.
²¹ Cared not a leak.
²² Do ye imagine.
²³ Do ye despise.
²⁴ I command.
²⁵ Been.
²⁶ Well-known.

As they that have done noble gesta,¹
 And have achieved all their quests,²
 As well of Love, as other thing;
 All³ was us never brooch, nor ring,
 Nor ellës aught from women sent,
 Nor onës in their heartë meant
 To make us only friendly cheer,
 But mightë teem us upon bier;⁴
 Yet let us to the people seem
 Such as the world may of us deem,⁵
 That women loven us for wood.⁶
 It shall us do as muchë good,
 And to our heart as much avail,
 The counterpoise,⁷ ease, and traváil,
 As we had won it with labéur;
 For that is dearë bought honoúr,
 At the regard of⁸ our great ease.
 And yet⁹ ye must us morë please;
 Let us be holden eke thereto
 Worthy, and wise, and good also,
 And rich, and happy unto love,
 For Goddë's love, that sits above;
 Though we may not the body have
 Of women, yet, so God you save,
 Let men glue¹⁰ on us the name;
 Sufficeth that we have the fame."
 "I grantë," quoth she, "by my troth;
 Now Æolus, withoutë sloth,
 Take out thy trump of gold," quoth she,
 "And blow as they have asked me,
 That ev'ry man ween¹¹ them at ease,
 Although they go in full bad leas."¹²
 This Æolus gan it so blow,
 That through the world it was y-know.

Then came the seventh rout anon,
 And fell on kneës ev'ry one,
 And saidë, "Lady, grant us soon
 The samë thing, the samë boon,
 Which this next folk¹³ you have dona."
 "Fy on you," quoth she, "ev'ry one!
 Ye nasty swine, ye idle wretches,
 Full fill'd of rotten slowë tetches!¹⁴
 What? falsë thievës! ere ye would
 Be famous good,¹⁵ and nothing n'ould
 Deservë why, nor never raught,¹⁶
 Men rather you to hangen ought.
 For ye be like the sleepy cat,
 That would have fish; but, know'st thou what?
 He wouldë no thing wet his claws.
 Evil thrift come to your jaws,
 And eke to mine, if I it grant,
 Or do favour you to avaunt.¹⁷
 Thou Æolus, thou King of Thrace,
 Go, blow this folk a sorry grace,"¹⁸
 Quoth she, "anon; and know'st thou how?"

¹ Feats.² Enterprises; desires.³ Although.⁴ Might lay us on our bier (by their adverse demeanour).⁵ Judge.⁶ Madly.⁷ Compensation.⁸ In comparison with.⁹ Further, in addition.¹⁰ Fasten.¹¹ Believe.¹² In evil leas; in sorry plight.¹³ The people just before us.¹⁴ Blemishes, spots; French, "tache."¹⁵ Have good fame.¹⁶ Recked, cared (to do so).¹⁷ To boast your deeds, advance vauntingly your fame.¹⁸ Mischance, disgrace.¹⁹ See note 33, page 219.²⁰ Could not refuse them her love.

As I shall tellë thee right now,
 Say, these be they that would honoúr
 Have, and do no kind of laboúr,
 Nor do no good, and yet have land,
 And that men ween'd that Belle Isaude¹⁹
 Could them not of lovë wern;²⁰
 And yet she that grinds at the quern²¹
 Is all too good to ease their heart."
 This Æolus anon upstart,
 And with his blackë clarioún
 He gan to blazen out a soun'
 As loud as bellows wind in hell;
 And eke therewith, the sooth to tell,
 This soundë was so full of japes,²²
 As ever werë mows²³ in apes;
 And that went all the world about,
 That ev'ry wight gan on them shout,
 And for to laugh as they were wood;²⁴
 Such gamë found they in their hood.²⁵

Then came another company,
 That haddë done the treachery,
 The harm, and the great wickedness,
 That any heartë couldë guess;
 And prayed her to have good fame,
 And that she would do them no shame,
 But give them los and good renown,
 And do it blow²⁶ in clarioún.
 "Nay, wis!" quoth she, "it were a vice;
 All be there in me no justice,
 Me listë not²⁷ to do it now,
 Nor this will I grant to you."

Then came there leaping in a rout,²⁸
 And gan to clappen²⁹ all about
 Every man upon the crown,
 That all the hall began to soun';
 And saidë; "Lady lefe³⁰ and dear,
 We be such folk as ye may hear.
 To tellen all the tale aright,
 We be shrewës³¹ every wight,
 And have delight in wickedness,
 As goodë folk have in goodnëss,
 And joy to be y-knowen shrews,
 And full of vice and wicked thews;³²
 Wherefore we pray you on a row,³³
 That our fame be such y-know
 In all things right as it is."
 "I grant it you," quoth she, "y-wis.
 But what art thou that say'st this tale,
 That wearest on thy hose a pale,³⁴
 And on thy tippet such a bell?"
 "Madámë," quoth he, "sooth to tell,
 I am that ilkë shrew,³⁵ y-wis,
 That burnt the temple of Isidis,
 In Athenës, lo! that city."³⁶
 "And wherefore didst thou so?" quoth she.

²¹ Mill. See note 20, page 157.²² Jests, scornful sayings.²³ Grimaces.²⁴ Mad.²⁵ So were they turned to ridicule. See note 6, page 433.²⁶ Cause it to be blown.²⁷ It is not my pleasure.²⁸ Crowd.²⁹ Strike, knock.³⁰ Loved.³¹ Wicked, impious.³² Evil qualities.³³ All together.³⁴ Perpendicular stripe; a heraldic term.³⁵ That same wicked wretch.³⁶ Obviously Chaucer should have said the temple of Diana, or Artemis (to whom, as Goddess of the Moon, the Egyptian Isis corresponded), at Ephesus. The building, famous for its splendour, was set on fire, in

"By my thrift!" quoth he, "Madame,
I would¹ fain have had a name
As other folk had in the town;
Although they were of great renown
For their virtue and their thews,²
Thought I, as great fame have shrews
(Though it be naught) for shrewdness,
As good folk have for goodness;
And since I may not have the one,
The other will I not forgo'n.³
So for to gettē fame's hire,⁴
The temple set I all afire.
Now do our los be blowen swithe,
As wisly be thou ever blithe."⁵
"Gladly," quoth she; "thou Æolus,
Hear'st thou what these folk prayen us?"
"Madame, I hear full well," quoth he,
"And I will trampen it, pardie!"
And took his blackē trumpet fast,
And gan to puffen and to blast,
Till it was at the worldē's end.

With that I gan aboutē wend,⁶
For one that stood right at my back
Me thought full goodly⁷ to me spake,
And saidē, "Friend, what is thy name?
Art thou come hither to have fame?"
"Nay, for soothē,⁸ friend!" quoth I;
"I came not hither, grand mercý,⁹
For no such causē, by my head!
Sufficeth me, as I were dead,
That no wight have my name in hand.
I wot myself best how I stand,
For what I dree,¹⁰ or what I think,
I will myself it allē drink,
Certain, for the morē part,
As far forth as I know mine art."
"What doest thou here, then," quoth he.
Quoth I, "That will I tellē thee;
The causē why I standē here,
Is some new tidings for to lear,¹¹
Some newē thing, I know not what,
Tidings either this or that,
Of love, or suchē thingēs glad.
For, certainly, he that me made
To comē hither, said to me
I shouldē bothē hear and see
In this placē wondrous things;
But these be not such tidings
As I meant of." "No?" quoth he.
And I answered, "No, pardie!
For well I wot ever yet,
Since that first I haddē wit,
That some folk have desired fame

Diversely, and los, and name;
But certainly I knew not how
Nor where that Fame dwelled, ere now;
Nor eke of her description,
Nor also her condition,
Nor the order of her doom,¹²
Knew I not till I hither come."
"Why, then, lo! be these tidings,
That thou nowē hither brings,
That thou hast heard?" quoth he to me.
"But now no force;¹³ for well I see
What thou desirest for to lear.¹⁴
Come forth, and stand no longer here.
And I will thee, withoutē dread,¹⁵
Into another placē lead,
Where thou shalt hear many a one."
Then gan I forth with him to go'n
Out of the castle, sooth to say.
Then saw I stand in a vallēy,
Under the castle fastē by,
A house, that *domus Dædali*,
That *Labyrinthus*¹⁶ callēd is,
N' as¹⁷ made so wondrously, y-wis,
Nor half so quaintly¹⁸ was y-wrought.
And evermore, as swift as thought,
This quaintē¹⁹ house aboutē went,
That nevermore it stillē stent;²⁰
And thereout came so great a noise,
That had it stoodē upon Oise,²¹
Men might have heard it easily
To Rome, I trowē sickerly.²²
And the noisē which I heard,
For all the world right so it far'd
As doth the routing²³ of the stone
That from the engine²⁴ is let go'n.
And all this house of which I read²⁵
Was made of twiggēs sallow,²⁶ red,
And green eke, and some werē white,
Such as men to the cages twight,²⁷
Or maken of²⁸ these panniers,
Or ellēs hutches or dossers;²⁹
That, for the swough³⁰ and for the twiga,
This house was all so full of gigs,³¹
And all so full eke of chirkinges,³²
And of many other workings;
And eke this house had of entries
As many as leavēs be on trees,
In summer when that they be green,
And on the roof men may yet see'm
A thousand holēs, and well mo',
To let the soundēs outē go.
And by day in ev'ry tide³³
Be all the doorēs open wide,

B.C. 366, by Erostatas, merely that he might perpetuate his name.

¹ Good qualities.

² Forego.

³ The reward of fame.

⁴ Cause our renown to be blown abroad quickly.

⁵ As sure as thou mayest ever be glad.

⁶ Go, turn.

⁷ Courteously, fairly.

⁸ Of a surety.

⁹ Great thanks! gramercy!

¹⁰ Suffer.

¹¹ Learn.

¹² The rule, principle, of her judgments.

¹³ No matter.

¹⁴ Doubt.

¹⁵ The Labyrinth at Cnossus in Crete, constructed by Dædalus for the safe keeping of the Minotaur, the fruit of Pasiphaë's unnatural love.

¹⁶ Was not.

¹⁷ Strangely: strange.

¹⁸ It never ceased to move.

¹⁹ The river Oise, an affluent of the Seine, in France.

²⁰ I confidently believe.

²¹ Roaring, rushing noise.

²² The machines for casting stones, which in Chaucer's time served the purpose of great artillery; they were called "mangonella," "springolds," &c.; and resembled in construction the "ballistæ" and "catapultæ" of the ancients.

²³ Of which I tell you.

²⁴ Willow.

²⁵ Plucked or pulled to make cages; "twight" is the past tense of "twitch."

²⁶ Or of which they make.

²⁷ Baskets to be carried on the back.

²⁸ Rushing inarticulate sound.

²⁹ Jigging or irregular sounds produced by the wind.

³⁰ Chirpings, creakings.

³¹ In every time; continually.

And by night each one unshet;¹
 Nor porter there is none to let²
 No manner tidings in to pace;
 Nor ever rest is in that place,
 That it n' is³ fill'd full of tidings,
 Either loud, or of whisperings;
 And ever all the house's angles
 Are full of rownings and of jangles,⁴
 Of wars, of peace, of marriages,
 Of rests, of labour, of voyages,
 Of abode, of death, of life,
 Of love, of hate, accord, of strife,
 Of loss, of lore, and of winnings,
 Of health, of sickness, of buildings,
 Of fairë weather and tempësts,
 Of qualm⁵ of folkës and of beasts;
 Of divers transmutatiöns
 Of estates and of regiöns;
 Of trust, of dread,⁶ of jealousy,
 Of wit, of cunning, of folly,
 Of plenty, and of great famine,
 Of cheap, of dearth,⁷ and of ruin;
 Of good or of mis-government,
 Of fire, and diverse accident.
 And lo! this house of which I write,
 Sicker be ye,⁸ it was not lite;⁹
 For it was sixty mile of length,
 All¹⁰ was the timber of no strength;
 Yet it is founded to endure,
 While that it list to Adventüre,¹¹
 That is the mother of tidings,
 As is the sea of wells and springs;
 And it was shapen like a cage.
 "Certes," quoth I, "in all mine age,¹²
 Ne'er saw I such a house as this."

And as I wonder'd me, y-wis,
 Upon this house, then ware was I
 How that mine eagle, fastë by,
 Was perched high upon a stone;
 And I gan straightë to him go'n,
 And saidë thus; "I prayë thee
 That thou a while abidë me,¹³
 For Goddë's love, and let me see
 What wonders in this placë be;
 For yet parauntre¹⁴ I may lear¹⁵
 Some good thereon, or somewhat hear,
 That lafe me were,¹⁶ ere that I went."
 "Peter! that is mine intent,"
 Quoth he to me; "therefore I dwell;¹⁷
 But, certain, one thing I thee tell,
 That, but¹⁸ I bringë thee therein,
 Thou shalt never can begin¹⁹
 To come into it, out of doubt,
 So fast it whirleth, lo! about.
 But since that Jovia, of his grace,
 As I have said, will thee solace

Finally with these ilkë²⁰ things,
 These uncouth sightës and tidings,
 To pass away thy heaviness,
 Such ruth²¹ hath he of thy distress
 That thou suff'rest debonairly,²²
 And know'st thyselfen utterly
 Desperate of allë bliss,
 Since that Fortune hath made amiss
 The fruit of all thy heartë's rest
 Languish, and eke in point to brest;²³
 But he, through his mighty merite,
 Will do thee ease, all be it lite,²⁴
 And gave express commandement,
 To which I am obediënt,
 To further thee with all my might,
 And wiss²⁵ and teachë thee aright,
 Where thou may'st mostë tidings hear,
 Shalt thou anon many one lear."

And with this word he right anon
 Hent²⁶ me up betwixt his tone,²⁷
 And at a window in me brought,
 That in this house was, as me thought;
 And therewithal me thought it stent,²⁸
 And nothing it aboutë went;
 And set me in the floorë down.
 But such a congregatioun
 Of folk, as I saw roam about,
 Some within and some without,
 Was never seen, nor shall be eft,²⁹
 That, certes, in the world n' is³⁰ left
 So many formed by Natüre,
 Nor dead so many a creatüre,
 That well unnethës³¹ in that place
 Had I a footë breadth of space;
 And ev'ry wight that I saw there
 Rown'd³² evereach in other's ear
 A newë tiding privily,
 Or ellës told all openly
 Right thus, and saidë, "Know'st not thou
 What is betid,³³ lo! rightë now?"
 "No," quoth he; "tellë me what."
 And then he told him this and that,
 And swore thereto, that it was sooth;³⁴
 "Thus hath he said," and "Thus he do'th,"
 And "Thus shall't be," and "Thus heard I say,"
 "That shall be found, that dare I lay;³⁵
 That all the folk that is alive
 Have not the cunning to describe³⁶
 The thingës that I heardë there,
 What aloud, and what in th' ear.
 But all the wonder most was this;
 When one had heard a thing, y-wis,
 He came straight to another wight,
 And gan him tellen anon right
 The same tale that to him was told,
 Or it a furlong way was old,³⁷

1 Unshut, open.

3 Hinder.

2 Is not.

4 Whisperings and chattering.

5 Sickness.

6 Doubt.

7 Cheapness and dearness (of provisions).

8 Be assured.

9 Small.

10 Although.

11 While Chance or Fortune pleases.

12 In all my life.

13 Wait for me.

14 Peradventure.

15 Learn.

16 That were pleasing to me.

17 Tarry, remain.

18 Except.

19 Thou shalt never be able.

20 Same.

21 Compassion.

22 Gently.

23 On the point of breaking.

24 Little.

25 Direct.

26 Caught.

27 Toes.

28 Stopped.

29 Again, hereafter.

30 Is not.

31 Scarcely.

32 Whispered.

33 Happened.

34 Truth.

35 Wager.

36 Describe.

37 Before it was older than the space of time during which one might walk a furlong; a measure of time often employed by Chaucer.

And gan somewhat for to eche¹
 To this tiding in his speech,
 More than it ever spoken was.
 And not so soon departed n' as²
 He from him, than that he met
 With the third; and ere he let
 Any stound,³ he told him als';⁴
 Were the tidings true or false,
 Yet would he tell it natheless,
 And evermore with more increase
 Than it was erst.⁵ Thus north and south
 Went ev'ry tiding from mouth to mouth,
 And that increasing evermo',
 As fire is wont to quick and go⁶
 From a spark y-sprung amiss,⁷
 Till all a city burnt up is.
 And when that it was full up-sprung,
 And waxen⁸ more on ev'ry tongue
 Than e'er it was, it went anon
 Up to a window out to go'n;
 Or, but it mighte⁹ thereout pass,
 It gan creep out at some crevasse,¹⁰
 And fly forth faste for the nonce.
 And sometimes saw I there at once
 A leasing, and a sad sooth saw,¹¹
 That gan of adventurē¹² draw
 Out at a window for to pace;
 And when they metten in that place,
 They werē checked both the two,
 And neither of them might out go;
 For other so they gan to crowd,¹³
 Till each of them gan cryen loud,
 "Let me go first!"—"Nay, but let me!
 And here I will ensurē thee,
 With vowē, if thou wilt do so,
 That I shall never from thee go,
 But be thine owen sworn brother!
 We will us medle¹⁴ each with other,
 That no man, be he ne'er so wroth,
 Shall have one of us two, but both
 At onē, as beside his leave,¹⁵
 Come we at morning or at eve,
 Be we criēd or still y-rownd."¹⁶
 Thus saw I false and sooth, compounded,¹⁷
 Together fly for one tiding.

Then out at holēs gan to wring¹⁸
 Every tiding straight to Fame;
 And she gan give to each his name
 After her dispositiōn,
 And gave them eke duratiōn,

¹ Eke, add.

² Without delaying a moment.

³ Also.

⁴ Quicken, become alive, and spread.

⁵ Which has leapt into the wrong place.

⁶ Increased.

⁷ Crevice, chink; French, "crevasse."

⁸ A falsehood and an earnest true saying.

⁹ By chance.

¹⁰ Mingle.

¹¹ In spite of his desire.

¹² Quietly whispered.

¹³ To squeeze, struggle.

¹⁴ Sailors and pilgrims, who seem to have in Chaucer's time amply warranted the proverbial imputation against "travellers' tales."

¹⁵ With scrips or wallets brimful of falsehoods.

¹⁶ Intermingled.

¹⁷ "Tidings" are evidently news or stories containing simple reflections of facts.

¹⁸ Was.

¹⁹ At first.

²⁰ If it might not.

²¹ Compounded.

²² Company.

Some to wax and wanē soon,
 As doth the fairē whitē moon;
 And let them go. There might I see
 Winged wonders full fast flee,
 Twenty thousand in a rout,¹⁹
 As Æolus them blew about.
 And, Lord! this House in allē times
 Was full of shipmen and pilgrimes,²⁰
 With scrippēs bretfull of leasings,²¹
 Entremedled²² with tidings²³
 And eke alonē by themselves.
 And many thousand times twelve
 Saw I eke of these pardoners,²⁴
 Couriers, and eke messengers,
 With boistēs²⁵ crammed full of lies
 As ever vessel was with lyes.²⁶
 And as I altherfastē²⁷ went
 About, and did all mine intent
 Me for to play and for to lear,²⁸
 And eke a tiding for to hear
 That I had heard of some countrē,
 That shall not now be told for me;—
 For it no need is, readilē;
 Folk can sing it better than I.
 For all must out, or late or rath,²⁹
 All the sheavēs in the lath;—³⁰
 I heard a greatē noise withal
 In a corner of the hall,
 Where men of lovē tidings told;
 And I gan thitherward behold,
 For I saw running ev'ry wight
 As fast as that they haddē might,
 And ev'reach cried, "What thing is that?"
 And some said, "I know never what."
 And when they were all on a heap,
 Those behindē gan up leap,
 And clomb upon each other fast,³¹
 And up the noise on high they cast,
 And trodden fast on others' heels,
 And stamp'd, as men do after eels.
 But at the last I saw a man,
 Which that I not describē can;
 But that he seemed for to be
 A man of great authority.
 And therewith I anon abraid³²
 Out of my sleepē, half afraid;
 Rememb'ring well what I had seen,
 And how high and far I had been
 In my ghost;³³ and had great wonder
 Of what the mighty god of thunder

²⁴ Of whom Chaucer, in the Prologue to The Canterbury Tales, has given us no flattering typical portrait (page 24).

²⁵ Boxes.

²⁶ Lees (of wine, &c.)

²⁷ With all speed.

²⁸ To amuse and instruct myself.

²⁹ Late or soon.

³⁰ Barn; still used in Lincolnshire and some parts of the north. The meaning is, that the poet need not tell what tidings he wanted to hear, since everything of the kind must some day come out—as sooner or later every sheaf in the barn must be brought forth (to be threshed).

³¹ A somewhat similar heaping-up of people is described in Spenser's account of the procession of Lucifer ("The Faerie Queen," book i. canto iv.), where, as the royal dame passes to her coach,

"The heaps of people, thronging in the hall,
 Do ride each other, upon her to gaze."

³² Awoke.

³³ Spirit.

Had let me know ; and gan to write
Like as ye have me heard endite.
Wherefore to study and read alway
I purpose to do day by day.

And thus, in dreaming and in game,
Endeth this little book of Fame.

Here endeth the Book of Fame.

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA.

[In several respects, the story of "Troilus and Cressida" may be regarded as Chaucer's noblest poem. Larger in scale than any other of his individual works—numbering nearly half as many lines as The Canterbury Tales contain, without reckoning the two in prose—the conception of the poem is yet so closely and harmoniously worked out, that all the parts are perfectly balanced, and from first to last scarcely a single line is superfluous or misplaced. The finish and beauty of the poem as a work of art, are not more conspicuous than the knowledge of human nature displayed in the portraits of the principal characters. The result is, that the poem is more modern, in form and in spirit, than almost any other work of its author ; the chaste style and sedulous polish of the stanzas admit of easy change into the forms of speech now current in England ; while the analytical and subjective character of the work gives it, for the nineteenth century reader, an interest of the same kind as that inspired, say, by George Eliot's wonderful study of character in "Romola." Then, above all, "Troilus and Cressida" is distinguished by a purity and elevation of moral tone, that may surprise those who judge of Chaucer only by the coarse traits of his time preserved in The Canterbury Tales, or who may expect to find here the Troilus, the Cressida, and the Pandarus of Shakspeare's play. It is to no trivial gallant, no woman of coarse mind and easy virtue, no malignantly subservient and utterly debased procurer, that Chaucer introduces us. His Troilus is a noble, sensitive, generous, pure-souled, manly, magnanimous hero, who is only confirmed and stimulated in all virtue by his love, who lives for his lady, and dies for her falsehood, in a lofty and chivalrous fashion. His Cressida is a stately, self-contained, virtuous, tender-hearted woman, who loves with all the pure strength and trustful abandonment of a generous and exalted nature, and who is driven to infidelity perhaps even less by pressure of circumstances, than by the sheer force of her love, which will go on loving—loving what it can have, when that which it would rather have is for the time unattainable. His Pandarus is a gentleman, though a gentleman with a flaw in him ; a man who, in his courtier-like good-nature, places the claims of comradeship above those of honour, and plots away the virtue of his niece, that he may appease the love-sorrow of his friend ; all the time conscious that he is not acting as a gentleman should, and desirous that others should give him that justification which he can get but feebly and diffidently in himself. In fact, the "Troilus and Cressida" of Chaucer is the "Troilus and Cressida" of Shakspeare transfigured ; the atmosphere, the colour, the spirit, are wholly different ; the older poet presents us in the chief characters to noble natures, the younger to ignoble natures in all the characters ; and the poem with which we have now to do stands at this day among the noblest expositions of love's workings in the human heart and life. It is divided into five books, containing altogether 8246 lines. The First Book (1092 lines) tells how Calchas, priest of Apollo, quitting beleaguered Troy, left there his only daughter Cressida ; how Troilus, the youngest brother of Hector and son of King Priam, fell in love with her at first sight, at a festival in the temple of Pallas, and sorrowed bitterly for her love ; and how his friend, Cressida's uncle, Pandarus, comforted him by the promise of aid in his suit. The Second Book (1757 lines) relates the subtle manœuvres of Pandarus to induce Cressida to return the love of Troilus ; which he accomplishes mainly by touching at once the lady's admiration for his heroism, and her pity for his love-sorrow on her account. The Third Book (1827 lines) opens with an account of the first interview between the lovers ; ere it closes, the skilful stratagems of Pandarus have placed the pair in each other's arms under his roof, and the lovers are happy in perfect enjoyment of each other's love and trust. In the Fourth Book (1701 lines) the course of true love ceases to run smooth ; Cressida is compelled to quit the city, in ransom for Antenor, captured in a skirmish ; and she sadly

departs to the camp of the Greeks, vowing that she will make her escape, and return to Troy and Troilus within ten days. The Fifth Book (1869 lines) sets out by describing the court which Diomedes, appointed to escort her, pays to Cressida on the way to the camp; it traces her gradual progress from indifference to her new suitor, to incontinence with him; and it leaves the deserted Troilus dead on the field of battle, where he has sought an eternal refuge from the new grief provoked by clear proof of his mistress's infidelity. The polish, elegance, and power of the style, and the acuteness of insight into character, which mark the poem, seem to claim for it a date considerably later than that adopted by those who assign its composition to Chaucer's youth: and the literary allusions and proverbial expressions with which it abounds, give ample evidence that, if Chaucer really wrote it at an early age, his youth must have been precocious beyond all actual record. Throughout the poem there are repeated references to the old authors of Trojan histories who are named in "The House of Fame" (page 240); but Chaucer especially mentions one Lollius as the author from whom he takes the groundwork of the poem. Lydgate is responsible for the assertion that Lollius meant Boccaccio; and though there is no authority for supposing that the English really meant to designate the Italian poet under that name, there is abundant internal proof that the poem was really founded on the "Filostrato" of Boccaccio. But the tone of Chaucer's work is much higher than that of his Italian "auctour;" and while in some passages the imitation is very close, in all that is characteristic in "Troilus and Cressida," Chaucer has fairly thrust his models out of sight. In the present edition, it has been possible to give no more than about one-fourth of the poem—274 out of the 1178 seven-line stanzas that compose it; but pains have been taken to convey, in the connecting prose passages, a faithful idea of what is perforce omitted.]

THE FIRST BOOK.

THE double sorrow of Troilus¹ to tell,
That was the King Priámus' son of Troy,
In loving how his adventúres² fell
From woe to weal, and after³ out of joy,
My purpose is, ere I you partē froy.⁴
Tisiphoné,⁵ thou help me to endite
These woeful words, that weep as I do write.

To thee I call, thou goddess of tormént!
Thou cruel wight, that sorrowest ever in pain;
Help me, that am the sorry instrument
That helpeth lovers, as I can, to plain.⁶
For well it sits,⁷ the soothē for to sayn,
Unto a woeful wight a dreary fere,⁸
And to a sorry tale a sorry cheer.⁹

For I, that God of Lovē's servants serve,
Nor dare to love for mine unlikeliness,¹⁰
Prayē for speed,¹¹ although I shouldē sterve,¹²
So far I am from his help in darknéss;
But natheless, might I do yet gladnéss
To any lover, or any love avail,¹³
Have thou the thank, and mine be the traváil.

But ye lovers that bathen in gladnéss,
If any drop of pity in you be,
Remember you for old past heaviness,
For Goddē's love, and on adversity
That others suffer; think how sometime ye
Foundē how Lovē durstē you displease;¹⁴
Or ellēs ye have won it with great ease.

¹ First his suffering before his love was successful; and then his grief after his lady had been separated from him, and had proved unfaithful.

² Fortunes.

³ Afterwards.

⁴ From.

⁵ One of the Eumenides, or Furies, who avenged on men in the next world the crimes committed on earth. Chaucer makes this grim invocation most fitly, since the Trojans were under the curse of the Eumenides, for their part in the offence of Paris in carrying off Helen, the wife of his host Menelaus, and thus impiously sinning against the laws of hospitality.

And pray for them that beēn in the case
Of Troilus, as ye may after hear,
That Love them bring in heaven to solace;¹⁵
And for me pray alsó, that God so dear
May give me might to show, in some mannere,
Such pain or woe as Lovē's folk endure,
In Troilus' unseely adventúre.¹⁶

And pray for them that ekē be despair'd
In love, that never will recover'd be;
And eke for them that falsely be appair'd¹⁷
Through wicked tonguēs, be it he or she:
Or thus bid¹⁸ God, for his benignity,
To grant them soon out of this world to
pace,¹⁹
That be despaired of their lovē's grace.

And bid also for them that be at ease
In love, that God them grant persévérance,
And send them might their lovēs so to please,
That it to them be worship and pleasáncē;²⁰
For so hope I my soul best to advance,
To pray for them that Lovē's servants be,
And write their woe, and live in charity;

And for to have of them compassión,
As though I were their owen brother dear.
Now listen all with good entention,²¹
For I will now go straight to my mattére,
In which ye shall the double sorrow hear
Of Troilus, in loving of Cresside,
And how that she forsook him ere she died.

⁶ Complain.

⁷ Befits.

⁸ Companion.

⁹ Countenance.

¹⁰ Unsuitableness. See Chaucer's description of himself in "The House of Fame," page 235, and note 1.

¹¹ Success.

¹² Die.

¹³ Advantage, advance.

¹⁴ Prove adverse to you.

¹⁵ Delight, comfort.

¹⁶ Unhappy fortune.

¹⁷ Injured, slandered.

¹⁸ Pray.

¹⁹ Pass, go.

²⁰ Honour and pleasure.

²¹ Attention.

In Troy, during the siege, dwelt "a lord of great authority, a great divine," named Calchas; who, through the oracle of Apollo, knew that Troy should be destroyed. He stole away secretly to the Greek camp, where he was gladly received, and honoured for his skill in divining, of which the besiegers hoped to make use. Within the city there was great anger at the treason of Calchas; and the people declared that he and all his kin were worthy to be burnt. His daughter, whom he had left in the city, a widow and alone, was in great fear for her life.

Cressida was this lady's name aright;
As to my doom,¹ in allë Troy city
So fair was none, for over ev'ry wight
So angelic was her native beauty,
That like a thing immortal seemed she,
As sooth a perfect heav'nly creature,
That down seem'd sent in scorning of Nature.²

In her distress, "well nigh out of her wit for purë fear," she appealed for protection to Hector; who, "piteous of nature," and touched by her sorrow and her beauty, assured her of safety, so long as she pleased to dwell in Troy. The siege went on; but they of Troy did not neglect the honour and worship of their deities; most of all of "the relic hight Palladion,³ that was their trust aboven ev'ry one." In April, "when clothed is the mead with newë green, of jolly Ver the prime," the Trojans went to hold the festival of Palladion—crowding to the temple, "in all their bestë guise," lusty knights, fresh ladies, and maidens bright.

Among the which was this Cressida,
In widow's habit black; but nathelless,
Right as our firstë letter is now A,
In beauty first so stood she makëless;⁴
Her goodly looking gladdened all the press;⁵
Was never seen thing to be praised derre,⁶
Nor under blackë cloud so bright a sterre,⁷

As she was, as they saiden, ev'ry one
That her behelden in her blackë weed;⁸
And yet she stood, full low and still, alone,
Behind all other folk, in little brede,⁹
And nigh the door, ay under shamë's drede;¹⁰
Simple of bearing, debonair¹¹ of cheer,
With a full surë¹² looking and mannëre.

Dan Troilus, as he was wont to guide
His youngë knightës, led them up and down

In that large temple upon ev'ry side,
Beholding ay the ladies of the town;
Now here, now there, for no devotioun
Had he to none, to reavë him¹³ his rest,
But gan to praise and lackë whom him lest;¹⁴

And in his walk full fast he gan to wait¹⁵
If knight or squiër of his company
Gan for to sigh, or let his eyen bait¹⁶
On any woman that he could espy;
Then he would smile, and hold it a folly,
And say him thus: "Ah, Lord, she sleepeth soft
For love of thee, when as thou turnest oft."¹⁷

"I have heard told, pardie, of your living,
Ye lovers, and your lewëd¹⁸ observance,
And what a labour folk have in winning
Of love, and in it keeping with doubtance;¹⁹
And when your prey is lost, woe and penance;²⁰
Oh, very foolës! may ye no thing see?
Can none of you aware by other be?"²¹

But the God of Love vowed vengeance on
Troilus for that despite, and, showing that his
bow was not broken, "hit him at the full."

Within the temple went he forth playing,
This Troilus, with ev'ry wight about,
On this lady and now on that looking,
Whether she were of town, or of without;²²
And upon cas²³ befell, that through the rout²⁴
His eyë pierced, and so deep it went,
Till on Cresside it smote, and there it stent;²⁵

And suddenly wax'd wonder sore astoned,²⁶
And gan her bet²⁷ behold in busy wise:
"Oh, very god!"²⁸ thought he; "where hast
thou woned²⁹

That art so fair and goodly to devise?"³⁰
Therewith his heart began to spread and rise;
And soft he sighed, lest men might him hear,
And caught again his former playing cheer.³¹

She was not with the least of her stature,³²
But all her limbës so well answering
Werë to womanhood, that creature
Was never lessë mannish in seeming.
And eke the purë wise of her moving³³
She showed well, that men might in her guess
Honour, estate,³⁴ and womanly nobless.

Then Troilus right wonder well withal
Began to like her moving and her cheer,
Which somedea! dainous³⁵ was, for she let fall
Her look a little aside, in such mannëre
Ascauncë³⁶ "What! may I not standë here?"

¹ In my judgment.

² Truly she seemed some angel, sent on earth to put to scorn the works of Nature.

³ The Palladium, or image of Pallas (daughter of Triton and foster-sister of Athena), was said to have fallen from heaven at Troy, where Ilus was just beginning to found the city; and Ilus erected a sanctuary, in which it was preserved with great honour and care, since on its safety was supposed to depend the safety of the city. In later times a Palladium was any statue of the goddess Athena kept for the safeguard of the city that possessed it.

⁴ Matchless.

⁵ Dearer, more worthy.

⁷ Star.

³ Crowd.

⁸ Garment.

⁹ In little breadth; not conspicuously.

¹⁰ Under the doubt or fear of shame (for her father's treason).

¹¹ Courteous, gracious.

¹² Assured.

¹³ Deprive him of.

¹⁴ Point out the deficiencies, speak disparagingly, of whom he pleased.

¹⁵ Watch, observe.

¹⁶ Feed.

¹⁷ Art awake and tossing in bed for thought of her.

¹⁸ Foolish.

¹⁹ Doubt.

²⁰ Suffering.

²¹ Take warning from others.

²² Or from the region of Troy beyond the walls.

²³ By chance.

²⁴ Crowd.

²⁵ Stayed.

²⁶ Amazed.

²⁷ Better.

²⁸ Oh true divinity!—addressing Cressida.

²⁹ Dwelt.

³⁰ Tell, describe.

³¹ Jeating demeanour.

³² She was tall.

³³ By her simplest gestures, by the very way in which she moved.

³⁴ Dignity.

³⁵ Her demeanour was somewhat disdainful.

³⁶ As if to say—as much as to say. The word represents "Quasi dicasse" in Boccaccio. See note 20, page 87.

And after that her looking gan she light,¹
That never thought him see so good a sight.

And of her look in him there gan to quicken
So great desire, and strong affectioun,
That in his heart's bottom gan to sticken
Of her the fix'd and deep impressioun;
And though he erst had pored up and down,²
Then was he glad his hornes in to shrink;
Unnethes³ wist he how to look or wink.

Lo! he that held himselfe so cunning,
And scorned them that Love's paines drien,⁴
Was full unaware that love had his dwelling
Within the subtile streames⁵ of her eyen;
That suddenly he thought he feltē dien,
Right with her look, the spirit in his heart;
Blessed be Love, that thus can folk convert!

She thus, in black, looking to Troilus,
Over all things he stoodē to behold;
But his desire, nor wherefore he stood thus,
He neither cheerē made,⁶ nor wordē told;
But from afar, his manner for to hold,⁷
On other things sometimes his look he cast,
And eft⁸ on her, while that the service last.⁹

And after this, not fully all awhaped,¹⁰
Out of the temple all easily he went,
Repenting him that ever he had japed¹¹
Of Love's folk, lest fully the descent
Of scorn fell on himself; but what he meant,
Lest it were wist on any manner side,
His woe he gan dissemble and eke hide.

Returning to his palace, he begins hypocritically to smile and jest at Love's servants and their pains; but by and by he has to dismiss his attendants, feigning "other busy needs." Then, alone in his chamber, he begins to groan and sigh, and call up again Cressida's form as he saw her in the temple—"making a mirror of his mind, in which he saw all wholly her figure." He thinks no travail or sorrow too high a price for the love of such a goodly woman; and, "full unadvised of his woe coming,"

Thus took he purpose Love's craft to sue,¹²
And thought that he would work all privily,
First for to hide his desire all in mew¹³
From every wight y-born, all utterly,
But he might aught recover'd be thereby;¹⁴
Rememb'ring him, that love too wide y-blow¹⁵
Yields bitter fruit, although sweet seed be sow.

And, over all this, muchē more he thought
What thing to speak, and what to holden in;

¹ Her countenance assumed a pleasanter, less severe, expression.

² Though before he had freely cast his eyes about.

³ Hardly.

⁴ Dree, suffer.

⁵ Rays, glances.

⁶ Showed by his countenance.

⁷ To observe due courtesy or manners.

⁸ Again; another reading is "oft."

⁹ Lasted.

¹⁰ Confounded, daunted.

¹¹ Jested.

¹² Pursue.

¹³ Closely; in the cage or den of secrecy.

¹⁴ Unless he might gain any advantage by revealing his love.

¹⁵ Too much spoken of, bruited abroad.

¹⁶ Constrain—Latin, "arceo."

¹⁷ To gain on, overcome.

¹⁸ Consent, resolve.

¹⁹ The song is a translation of Petrarch's 88th Sonnet, which opens thus:

"S' amor non è, che dunque è quel ch' i sento."

And what to artē¹⁶ her to love, he sought;
And on a song anon right to begin,
And gan loud on his sorrow for to win:¹⁷
For with good hope he gan thus to assent¹⁸
Cressida for to love, and not repent.

*The Song of Troilus.*¹⁹

"If no love is, O God! why feel I so?
And if love is, what thing and which is he?
If love be good, from whence cometh my woe?
If it be wick', a wonder thinketh me²⁰
Whence ev'ry torment and adversity
That comes of love may to me savoury think:²¹
For more I thirst the morē that I drink.

"And if I at mine owen lustē bren²²
From whence cometh my wailing and my plaint?
If maugré me,²³ whereto²⁴ then do I plain?
I wot ner²⁵ why, unweary, that I faint.
O quickē death! O sweetē harm so quaint!²⁶
How may I see in me such quantity,²⁷
But if that I consent that so it be?

"And if that I consent, I wrongfully
Complain y-wis: thus pushed to and fro,
All starrēless within a boat am I,
Middēs the sea, betwixtē windēs two,
That in contrāry standen evermo'.
Alas! what wonder is this malady!
For heat of cold, for cold of heat, I die!"

Devoting himself wholly to the thought of Cressida—though he yet knew not whether she was woman or goddess—Troilus, in spite of his royal blood, became the very slave of love. He set at naught every other charge, but to gaze on her as often as he could; thinking so to appease his hot fire, which thereby only burned the hotter. He wrought marvellous feats of arms against the Greeks, that she might like him the better for his renown; then love deprived him of sleep, and made his food his foe; till he had to "borrow a title of other sickness," that men might not know he was consumed with love. Meantime, Cressida gave no sign that she heeded his devotion, or even knew of it; and he was now consumed with a new fear—lest she loved some other man. Bewailing his sad lot—ensnared, exposed to the scorn of those whose love he had ridiculed, wishing himself arrived at the port of death, and praying ever that his lady might glad him with some kind look—Troilus is surprised in his

²⁰ I must hold it a wonder.

²¹ Seem sweet and acceptable.

²² If I burn by my own will; "s' a mia voglia ardo."

²³ If (I burn) in spite of myself. The usual reading is, "If harm agree me"—if my hurt contents me: but evidently the antithesis is lost which Petrarch intended when, after "s' a mia voglia ardo," he wrote "s' a mal mio grado"—if against my will; and Urry's Glossary points out the probability that in transcription the words "If that maugre me" may have gradually changed into "If harm agree me."

²⁴ To what avail?

²⁵ Neither do I know.

²⁶ Strange.

²⁷ How may so much be in me, unless I consent that it should be so.

chamber by his friend Pandarus, the uncle of Cressida. Pandarus, seeking to divert his sorrow by making him angry, jeeringly asks whether remorse of conscience, or devotion, or fear of the Greeks, has caused all this ado. Troilus pitifully beseeches his friend to leave him to die alone, for die he must, from a cause which he must keep hidden; but Pandarus argues against Troilus' cruelty in hiding from a friend such a sorrow, and Troilus at last confesses that his malady is love. Pandarus suggests that the beloved object may be such that his counsel might advance his friend's desires; but Troilus scouts the suggestion, saying that Pandarus could never govern himself in love.

"Yea, Troilus, hearken to me," quoth Pandare,
 "Though I be nice;¹ it happens often so,
 That one that access² doth full evil fare,
 By good counsell can keep his friend therefro'.
 I have my selfe seen a blind man go
 Where as he fell that lookē could full wide;
 A fool may eke a wise man often guide.

"A whetstone is no carving instrument,
 But yet it maketh sharpē carving toolēs;
 And, if thou know'st that I have aught miswent,³
 Eschew thou that, for such thing to thee school⁴ is.
 Thus oughtē wise men to beware by foolēs;
 If so thou do, thy wit is well bewared;
 By its contráry is everything declared.

"For how might ever sweetness have been know
 To him that never tasted bitterness?
 And no man knows what gladness is, I trow,
 That never was in sorrow or distress:
 Eke white by black, by shame eke worthiness,
 Each set by other, more for other seemeth,⁵
 As men may see; and so the wise man deemeth."

Troilus, however, still begs his friend to leave him to mourn in peace, for all his proverbs can avail nothing. But Pandarus insists on plying the lover with wise saws, arguments, reproaches; hints that, if he should die of love, his lady may impute his death to fear of the Greeks; and finally induces Troilus to admit that the well of all his woe, his sweetest foe, is called Cressida. Pandarus breaks into praises of the lady, and congratulations of his friend for so well fixing his heart; he makes Troilus utter a formal confession of his sin in jesting at lovers, and bids him think well that she of whom rises all his woe, hereafter may his comfort be also.

"For thilkē⁶ ground, that bears the weedēs wick',

Bears eke the wholesome herbēs, and full oft
 Next to the foulē nettle, rough and thick,
 The lily waxeth,⁷ white, and smooth, and soft;
 And next the valley is the hill aloft,
 And next the darkē night is the glad morrow,
 And also joy is next the fine⁸ of sorrow."

Pandarus holds out to Troilus good hope of achieving his desire; and tells him that, since he has been converted from his wicked rebellion against Love, he shall be made the best post of all Love's law, and most grieve Love's enemies. Troilus gives utterance to a hint of fear; but he is silenced by Pandarus with another proverb—"Thou hast full great care, lest that the carl should fall out of the moon." Then the love-sick youth breaks into a joyous boast that some of the Greeks shall smart; he mounts his horse, and plays the lion in the field; while Pandarus retires to consider how he may best recommend to his niece the suit of Troilus.

THE SECOND BOOK.

In the Proem to the Second Book, the poet hails the clear weather that enables him to sail out of those black waves in which his boat so laboured that he could scarcely steer—that is, "the tempestuous matter of despair, that Troilus was in; but now of hope the kalendēs begin." He invokes the aid of Clio; excuses himself to every lover for what may be found amiss in a book which he only translates; and, obviating any lover's objection to the way in which Troilus obtained his lady's grace—through Pandarus' mediation—says it seems to him, no wonderful thing:

"For ev'ry wightē that to Romē went
 Held not one path, nor alway one mannere;
 Eke in some lands were all the game y-shent⁹
 If that men far'd in love as men do here,
 As thus, in open dealing and in cheer,
 In visiting, in form, or saying their saws;¹⁰
 For thus men say: Each country hath its laws.

"Eke scarcely be there in this placē three
 That have in love done or said like in all;"¹¹

And so that which the poem relates may not please the reader—but it actually was done, or it shall yet be done. The Book sets out with the visit of Pandarus to Cressida:—

In May, that mother is of monthēs glade,¹²
 When all the freshē flowers, green and red,
 Be quick¹³ again, that winter deadē made,
 And full of balm is floating ev'ry mead;
 When Phoebus doth his brightē beamēs spread
 Right in the whitē Bull, so it betid¹⁴
 As I shall sing, on Mayē's day the thrid,¹⁵

or to have had a special importance in connection with those May observances of which the poet so often speaks. It is on the third night of May that Palamon, in *The Knight's Tale*, breaks out of prison, and at early morn encounters in the forest Arcita, who has gone forth to pluck a garland in honour of May (pages 31, 32); it is on the third night of May that the poet hears the debate of "The Cuckoo and the Nightingale" (page 212); and again in the present passage the favoured date recurs.

¹ Foolish.

² Erred, failed.

³ That is, its quality is made more obvious by the contrast.

⁴ Groweth.

⁵ All the sport spoilt.

⁶ Alike in all respects.

⁷ Alive.

⁸ The Third of May seems either to have possessed peculiar favour or significance with Chaucer personally,

⁹ In an access of fever.

¹⁰ Schooling, lesson.

¹¹ That same.

¹² The border, the end.

¹³ Sayings, speeches.

¹⁴ Glad.

¹⁵ Happened.

That Pandarus, for all his wisē speech,
Felt eke his part of Lovē's shottēs keen,
That, could he ne'er so well of Lovē preach,
It madē yet his hue all day full green;¹
So shope it,² that him fell that day a teen³
In love, for which full woe to bed he went,
And made ere it were day full many a went.⁴

The swallow Prognē,⁵ with a sorrowful lay,
When morrow came, gan make her waimenting,⁶
Why she forshapen⁷ was; and ever lay
Pandare a-bed, half in a slumbering,
Till she so nigh him made her chittering,
How Tereus gan forth her sister take,
That with the noise of her he did awake,

And gan to call, and dress⁸ him to arise,
Rememb'ring him his errand was to do'n
From Troilus, and eke his great emprise;
And cast, and knew in good plight⁹ was the Moon
To do voyāge, and took his way full soon
Unto his niece's palace there beside:
Now Janus, god of entry, thou him guide!

Pandarus finds his niece, with two other ladies,
in a paved parlour, listening to a maiden who
reads aloud the story of the Siege of Thebes.
Greeting the company, he is welcomed by
Cressida, who tells him that for three nights
she has dreamed of him. After some lively
talk about the book they had been reading, Pan-
darus asks his niece to do away her hood, to
show her face bare, to lay aside the book, to
rise up and dance, "and let us do to May some
observānce." Cressida cries out, "God forbid!"
and asks if he is mad—if that is a widow's life,
whom it better becomes to sit in a cave and
read of holy saints' lives. Pandarus intimates
that he could tell her something which could
make her merry; but he refuses to gratify her
curiosity; and, by way of the siege and of
Hector, "that was the townē's wall, and
Greekēs' yerd" or scourging-rod, the conversa-
tion is brought round to Troilus, whom Pan-
darus highly extols as "the wise worthy Hector
the second." She has, she says, already heard
Troilus praised for his bravery "of them that
her were liefest praised be."¹⁰

"Ye say right sooth, y-wis," quoth Pandarus;
"For yesterday, who so had with him been,
Might havē wonder'd upon Troilus;
For never yet so thick a swarm of been¹¹
Ne flew, as did of Greekēs from him flee'n;
And through the field, in ev'ry wightē's ear,
There was no cry but 'Troilus is here.'"

¹ Pale.

² So decreed it; such was its effect.

³ An access or sickness of love.

⁴ Turning; from Anglo-Saxon, "wenden;" German, "wenden." The turning and tossing of uneasy lovers in bed is, with Chaucer, a favourite symptom of their passion. See the fifth "statute," page 203.

⁵ Procne, daughter of Pandion, king of Attica, was given to wife to Tereus in reward for his aid against an enemy; but Tereus dishonoured Philomela, Procne's sister; and his wife, in revenge, served up to him the body of his own child by her. Tereus, infuriated, pursued the two sisters, who prayed the gods to change them into birds. The prayer was granted; Philomela became a nightingale, Procne a swallow, and Tereus a hawk.

⁷ Transformed.

⁶ Lamentation.

⁸ Prepare.

"Now here, now there, he hunted them so fast,

There was but Greekēs' blood; and Troilus
Now him he hurt, now him adown he cast;
Ay where he went it was arrayed thus:
He was their death, and shield of life for us,
That as that day there durst him none with-
stand,

While that he held his bloody sword in hand."

Pandarus makes now a show of taking leave, but Cressida detains him, to speak of her affairs; then, the business talked over, he would again go, but first again asks his niece to arise and dance, and cast her widow's garments to mischance, because of the glad fortune that has befallen her. More curious than ever, she seeks to find out Pandarus' secret; but he still parries her curiosity, skilfully hinting all the time at her good fortune, and the wisdom of seizing on it when offered. In the end he tells her that the noble Troilus so loves her, that with her it lies to make him live or die—but if Troilus dies, Pandarus shall die with him; and then she will have "fished fair."¹² He beseeches mercy for his friend:

"Woe worth¹³ the fairē gemmē virtuelless!¹⁴
Woe worth the herb alsó that doth no boot!¹⁵
Woe worth the beauty that is ruthēless!¹⁶
Woe worth that wight that treads each under
foot!

And ye that be of beauty crop and root,¹⁷
If therewithal in you there be no ruth,
Then is it harm ye livē, by my truth!"

Pandarus makes only the slight request that she will show Troilus somewhat better cheer, and receive visits from him, that his life may be saved; urging that, although a man be seen going to the temple, nobody will think that he eats the images; and that "such love of friends reigneth in all this town."

Cressida, which that heard him in this wise,
Thought: "I shall feelē¹⁸ what he means,
y-wis;"

"Now, eme,"¹⁹ quoth she, "what would ye me
devise?"

What is your rede²⁰ that I should do of this?"
"That is well said," quoth he; "certain best
it is

That ye him love again for his loving,
As love for love is skilful guerdoning.²¹

"Think eke how eldē²² wasteth ev'ry hour
In each of you a part of your beauty;

⁹ In a favourable position or aspect.

¹⁰ By whom it would be most welcome to her to be praised.

¹¹ Bees.

¹² A proverbial phrase which probably may be best represented by the phrase "done great execution."

¹³ Evil befall!

¹⁴ Possessing none of the virtues which in the Middle Ages were universally believed to be inherent in precious stones.

¹⁵ Has no remedial power.

¹⁶ Merciless.

¹⁷ Perfection. See note 13, page 32.

¹⁸ I shall try, test.

¹⁹ Uncle; the mother's brother; still used in Lancashire. Anglo-Saxon, "eame;" German, "Oheim."

²⁰ Counsel, opinion.

²¹ Reasonable recompense.

²² Age.

And therefore, ere that age do you devour,
Go love, for, old,¹ there will no wight love thee :
Let this proverb a lore² unto you be :

“Too late I was ware,” quoth beauty when it
part ;

And eldē daunteth danger³ at the last.’

“The kingē’s fool is wont to cry aloud,
When that he thinks a woman bears her high,
‘So longē may ye liven, and all proud,
Till crowēs’ feet be wox⁴ under your eye !
And send you then a mirror in to pry⁵
In which ye may your facē see a-morrow !⁶
I keep then wishē you no morē sorrow.’ ”⁷

Weeping, Cressida reproaches her uncle for giving her such counsel ; whereupon Pandarus, starting up, threatens to kill himself, and would fain depart, but that his niece detains him, and, with much reluctance, promises to “make Troilus good cheer in honour.” Invited by Cressida to tell how first he knew her lover’s woe, Pandarus then relates two soliloquies which he had accidentally overheard, and in which Troilus had poured out all the sorrow of his passion.

With this he took his leave, and home he went ;
Ah ! Lord, so was he glad and well-begone !⁸
Cresside arose, no longer would she stent,⁹
But straight into her chamber went anon,
And sat her down, as still as any stone,
And ev’ry word gan up and down to wind
That he had said, as it came to her mind.

And wax’d somedeal¹⁰ astonish’d in her
thought,
Right for the newē case ; but when that she
Was full advised,¹¹ then she found right naught
Of peril, why she should afearēd be :
For a man may love, of possibility,
A woman so, that his heart may to-brest,¹²
And she not love again, but if her lest.¹³

But as she sat alone, and thoughtē thus,
In field arose a skirmish all without ;
And men cried in the street then : “Troilus
Hath right now put to flight the Greekēs’
rout.”¹⁴

With that gan all the meinie¹⁵ for to shout :
“Ah ! go we see, cast up the lattice wide,
For through this street he must to palace ride ;

“For other way is from the gatēs none,
Of Dardanus,¹⁶ where open is the chain.”¹⁷
With that came he, and all his folk anon,
An easy pace riding, in routēs twain,¹⁸
Right as his happy day¹⁹ was, sooth to sayn :

¹ When you are old.

² Lesson.

³ Old age overcomes fastidiousness or disdain at last, makes a woman more easy to woo.

⁴ Grown.

⁵ In which to pry or look.

⁶ Of a morning.

⁷ I care to wish you nothing worse.

⁸ Happy. ⁹ Refrain, stay. ¹⁰ Somewhat.

¹¹ Had fully considered. ¹² Break utterly.

¹³ Unless it so please her. ¹⁴ Host.

¹⁵ Cressida’s household.

¹⁶ The mythical ancestor of the Trojans, after whom the gate is supposed to be called.

¹⁷ All the other gates being secured with chains, for better defence against the besiegers.

¹⁸ Two troops or companies.

¹⁹ Good fortune ; French, “bonheur ;” both “happy

For which men say may not disturbed be
What shall betiden²⁰ of necessity.

This Troilus sat upon his bay steed
All armed, save his head, full richēly,
And wounded was his horse, and gan to bleed,
For which he rode a pace full softēly :
But such a knightly sightē²¹ truēly
As was on him, was not, withoutē fail,
To look on Mars, that god is of Battaile.

So like a man of armēs, and a knight,
He was to see, full fill’d of high prowēs ;
For both he had a body, and a might
To do that thing, as well as hardiness ;²²
And eke to see him in his gear²³ him dress,
So fresh, so young, so wieldy²⁴ seemed he,
It was a heaven on him for to see.²⁵

His helmet was to-hewn in twenty places,
That by a tissue²⁶ hung his back behind ;
His shield to-dashed was with swords and maces,
In which men might many an arrow find,
That thirled²⁷ had both horn, and nerve, and
rind ;²⁸

And ay the people cried, “Here comes our joy,
And, next his brother,²⁹ holder up of Troy.”

For which he wax’d a little red for shame,
When he so heard the people on him cryen,
That to behold it was a noble game,
How soberly he cast adown his eyen :
Cresside anon gan all his cheer espian,
And let it in her heart so softly sink,
That to herself she said, “Who gives me
drink ?”³⁰

For of her owen thought she wax’d all red,
Rememb’ring her right thus : “Lo ! this is he
Which that mine uncle swears he might be dead,
But³¹ I on him have mercy and pity :”
And with that thought for purē shamē she
Gan in her head to pull, and that full fast,
While he and all the people forthby pass’d.

And gan to cast,³² and rollen up and down
Within her thought his excellent prowēs,
And his estate, and also his renown,
His wit, his shape, and eke his gentleness ;
But most her favour was, for³³ his distress
Was all for her, and thought it werē ruth³⁴
To slay such one, if that he meant but truth.

And, Lord ! so gan she in her heart argūe
Of this mattēre, of which I have you told ;
And what to do best were, and what t’eschew,
That plaited she full oft in many a fold.³⁵
Now was her heartē warm, now was it cold.

day” and “happy hour” are borrowed from the astro-
logical fiction about the influence of the time of birth.

²⁰ Happen.

²¹ Aspect.

²² Courage.

²³ Armour.

²⁴ Active ; opposite of “unwieldy.”

²⁵ Look.

²⁶ Riband.

²⁷ Pierced.

²⁸ The various layers or materials of the shield—
called *βουρπιον* in the Iliad—which was made from
the hide of the wild bull.

²⁹ Hector.

³⁰ Who has given me a love-potion, to charm my heart
thus away ?

³¹ Unless.

³² Ponder.

³³ Because.

³⁴ Pity.

³⁵ Deliberated carefully, with many arguments this
way and that.

And what she thought of, somewhat shall I
write,

As to mine author listeth to endite.

She thought¹ first, that Troilus' person
She knew by sight, and eke his gentleness ;
And said² thus : " All were it not to do'n,¹
To grant him love, yet for the worthiness
It were honour, with play³ and with gladness,
In honesty with such a lord to deal,
For mine estate,⁴ and also for his heal.⁴

" Eke well I wot⁵ my king's son is he ;
And, since he hath to see me such delight,
If I would utterly his sight⁶ flee,
Paraunter⁶ he might have me in despite,
Through which I might⁷ stand in worse plight.⁷
Now were I fool, me hat⁸ to purchace⁸
Without⁹ need, where I may stand in grace.⁹

" In ev'rything,¹⁰ I wot, there lies measure ;¹⁰
For though a man forbidd¹¹ drunkenness,
He not forbids that ev'ry creature
Be drink¹²less for alway, as I guess ;
Eke, since I know for me is his distress,
I ought¹³ not for that thing him despise,
Since it is so he meaneth in good wise.

" Now set a case, that hardest is, y-wis,
Men might¹⁴ deem¹⁴ that he loveth me ;
What dishonour were it unto me, this ?
May I him let of¹⁵ that ? Why, nay, pardie !
I know also, and alway hear and see,
Men lov¹⁶ women all this town about ;
Be they the worse ? Why, nay, without¹⁷ doubt !

" Nor me to love a wonder is it not ;¹⁸
For well wot I myself, so God me speed !—
All would I¹⁹ that no man wist of this thought—
I am one of the fairest, without drede,¹⁵
And goodliest¹⁶, who so taketh heed ;
And so men say in all the town of Troy ;
What wonder is, though he on me have joy ?

" I am mine owen woman,¹⁶ well at ease,
I thank it God, as after mine estate,¹⁷
Right young, and stand untied in lusty leas,¹⁸
Without¹⁹ jealousy, or such debate :
Shall non²⁰ husband say to me ' checkmate ; '
For either they be full of jealousy,
Or masterful, or lov²¹ novelty.

" What shall I do ? to what fine¹⁹ live I thus ?
Shall I not love, in case if that me lest ?²⁰
What ? pardie ! I am not religious ;²¹
And though that I mine heart²² set at rest
Upon this knight that is the worthiest,

¹ Although it were impossible, out of the question.

² Pleasing entertainment. ³ Dignity, reputation.

⁴ Health ; cure (of his love-sickness).

⁵ Know. ⁶ Peradventure.

⁷ In a worse position in the city ; since she might
through his anger lose the protection of his brother
Hector.

⁸ Obtain for myself. ⁹ Favour.

¹⁰ A good medium, a moderate course.

¹¹ Believe. ¹² Prevent him from.

¹³ Nor is it a wonderful thing that I should love.

¹⁴ Although I would. ¹⁵ Doubt.

¹⁶ My own mistress.

¹⁷ Well to do, in accordance with my condition or
rank.

¹⁸ Not tied in the pleasant leash or snare (of love).

¹⁹ End, aim.

And keep alway mine honour and my name,
By all right I may do to me no shame."

But right as when the sunn²³ shineth bright
In March, that changeth oftentime his face,
And that a cloud is put with wind to flight,
Which overspreads the sun as for a space ;
A cloudy thought gan through her heart²⁴ pace,²²
That overspread her bright²⁵ thought²⁶ all,
So that for fear almost she gan to fall.

The cloudy thought is of the loss of liberty
and security, the stormy life, and the malice of
wicked tongues, that love entails :

[But] after that her thought began to clear,
And said²⁷, " He that nothing undertakes
Nothing achieveth, be him loth or dear."²³
And with another thought her heart²⁸ quakes ;
Then sleepeth hope, and after dread²⁴ awakes,
Now hot, now cold ; but thus betwixt the tway²⁵
She rist her up, and went²⁶ forth to play.²⁶

Adown the stair anon right then she went
Into a garden, with her nieces three,
And up and down they mad²⁷ many a went,²⁷
Flexippe and she, Tarké, Antigoné,
To play²⁸, that it joy was for to see ;
And other of her women, a great rout,²⁸
Her follow'd in the garden all about.

This yard was large, and railed the alléys,
And shadow'd well with blossomy boughs green,
And benched new, and sanded all the ways,
In which she walked arm and arm between ;
Till at the last Antigoné the sheen²⁹
Gan on a Trojan lay to sing³⁰ clear,
That it a heaven was her voice to hear.

Antigoné's song is of virtuous love for a noble
object ; and it is singularly fitted to deepen the
impression made on the mind of Cressida by the
brave aspect of Troilus, and by her own cogita-
tions. The singer, having praised the lover
and rebuked the revilers of love, proceeds :

" What is the Sunn³¹ worse of his kind right,³⁰
Though that a man, for feebleness of eyen,
May not endure to see on it for bright ?³¹
Or Love the worse, tho' wretches on it cryen ?
No weal³² is worth, that may no sorrow drien ;³²
And forthy,³⁴ who that hath a head of verre,³⁵
From cast of ston³³es ware him in the werre.³⁶

" But I, with all my heart and all my might,
As I have lov'd, will love unto my last
My dear³⁷ heart, and all my owen knight,
In which my heart y-grown is so fast,
And his in me, that it shall ever last :

²⁰ If it please me.

²¹ I am not in holy vows. See the complaint of the
nuns in "The Court of Love," page 208.

²² Pass.

²³ Be he unwilling or desirous.

²⁴ Doubt.

²⁵ Two.

²⁶ To take recreation.

²⁷ Winding, turn.

²⁸ Troop.

²⁹ Bright, lovely.

³⁰ Of his true nature.

³¹ For brightness ; the line recalls Milton's "dark
with excessive bright."

³² Happiness, welfare.

³³ Endure ; the meaning is, that whosoever cannot
endure sorrow deserves not happiness.

³⁴ Therefore.

³⁵ French, "verre ;" glass.

³⁶ Let him beware of casting stones in battle. The
proverb in its modern form warns those who live in
glass houses of the folly of throwing stones.

All dread I¹ first to lovè him begin,
Now wot I well there is no pain therein."

Cressida sighs, and asks Antigóné whether there is such bliss among these lovers, as they can fair endite; Antigóné replies confidently in the affirmative; and Cressida answers nothing, "but every wordè which she heard she gan to printen in her heartè fast." Night draws on:

The dayè's honour, and the heaven's eye,
The nightè's foe,—all this call I the Sun,—
Gan westren² fast, and downward for to wry,³
As he that had his dayè's course y-run;
And whitè thingès gan to waxè dun
For lack of light, and starrès to appear;
Then she and all her folk went home in fere.⁴

So, when it liked her to go to rest,
And voided⁵ werè those that voiden ought,
She saidè, that to sleepè well her lest.⁶
Her women soon unto her bed her brought;
When all was shut, then lay she still and
thought

Of all these things the manner and the wise;
Rehearse it needeth not, for ye be wise.

A nightingale upon a cedar green,
Under the chamber wall where as she lay,
Full loudè sang against the moonè sheen,
Parantre,⁷ in his birdè's wise, a lay
Of love, that made her heartè fresh and gay;
Hereat hark'd⁸ she so long in good intent,
Till at the last the deadè sleep her hent.⁹

And as she slept, anon right then her mette¹⁰
How that an eagle, feather'd white as bone,
Under her breast his longè clawès set,
And out her heart he rent, and that anon,
And did¹¹ his heart into her breast to go'n,
Of which no thing she was abash'd nor smert;¹²
And forth he flew, with heartè left for heart.

Leaving Cressida to sleep, the poet returns to Troilus and his zealous friend—with whose stratagems to bring the two lovers together the remainder of the Second Book is occupied. Pandarus counsels Troilus to write a letter to his mistress, telling her how he "fares amiss," and "beseeching her of ruth;" he will bear the letter to his niece; and, if Troilus will ride past Cressida's house, he will find his mistress and his friend sitting at a window. Saluting Pandarus, and not tarrying, his passage will give occasion for some talk of him, which may make his ears glow. With respect to the letter, Pandarus gives some shrewd hints:

"Touching thy letter, thou art wise enough,
I wot thou n'ilt it dignèly endite¹³
Or make it with these argumentès tough,

¹ Although I feared or hesitated.

² Began to west or wester—to decline towards the west; so Milton speaks of the morning star as aloping towards heaven's descent "his westering wheel."

³ Turn, incline.

⁵ Gone out (of the house).

⁷ Perchance.

⁹ Seized, came upon.

¹¹ Caused.

¹³ Wilt not write it proudly, haughtily (but in respectful terms).

⁴ In company.

⁶ Pleased.

⁸ Listened.

¹⁰ Dreamed.

¹² Amazed nor hurt.

¹⁴ Little.

Nor scrivener-like, nor craftily it write;
Beblot it with thy tears also a lite;¹⁴
And if thou write a goodly word all soft,
Though it be good, rehearse it not too oft.

"For though the bestè harper upon live¹⁵
Would on the best y-sounded jolly harp
That ever was, with all his fingers five
Touch ay one string, or ay one warble harp,¹⁶
Werè his nailès pointed ne'er so sharp,
He shouldè maken ev'ry wight to dull¹⁷
To hear his glee, and of his strokès full.

"Nor jompre¹⁸ eke no discordant thingy-fere,¹⁹
As thus, to usè termès of physíc;
In lovè's termès hold of thy mattère
The form alway, and do that it be like;²⁰
For if a painter wouldè paint a pike
With ass's feet, and head it as an ape,²¹
It 'cordeth not,²² so were it but a jape."²³

Troilus writes the letter, and next morning Pandarus bears it to Cressida. She refuses to receive "scrip or bill that toucheth such mat-tère;" but he thrusts it into her bosom, challenging her to throw it away. She retains it, takes the first opportunity of escaping to her chamber to read it, finds it wholly good, and, under her uncle's dictation, endites a reply telling her lover that she will not make herself bound in love; "but as his sister, him to please, she would aye fain²⁴ to do his heart an ease." Pandarus, under pretext of inquiring who is the owner of the house opposite, has gone to the window; Cressida takes her letter to him there, and tells him that she never did a thing with more pain than write the words to which he had constrained her. As they sit side by side, on a stone of jasper, on a cushion of beaten gold, Troilus rides by, in all his goodliness. Cressida waxes "as red as rose," as she sees him salute humbly, "with dreadful cheer, and oft his huès mue;"²⁵ she likes "all y-fere, his person, his array, his look, his cheer, his goodly manner, and his gentleness;" so that, however she may have been before, "to goodè hope now hath she caught a thorn, she shall not pull it out this nextè week." Pandarus, striking the iron when it is hot, asks his niece to grant Troilus an interview; but she strenuously declines, for fear of scandal, and because it is all too soon to allow him so great a liberty—her purpose being to love him unknown of all, "and guerdon²⁶ him with nothing but with sight." Pandarus has other intentions; and, while Troilus writes daily letters with increasing love, he contrives the means of an interview. Seeking out Deiphobus, the brother of Troilus, he tells him that Cressida is in danger of violence from Polyphete,

¹⁵ Alive.

¹⁶ Always harp one strain.

¹⁷ To grow dull.

¹⁹ Together.

²⁰ Make it consistent, congruous, throughout.

²¹ This is merely another version of the well-known example of incongruity that opens the "Ars Poetica" of Horace.

²³ Is not harmonious.

²⁴ Be glad.

²⁶ Reward.

¹⁸ Jumble.

²² An idle jest.

²⁵ Change.

and asks protection for her. Deiphobus gladly complies, promises the protection of Hector and Helen, and goes to invite Cressida to dinner on the morrow. Meantime Pandarus instructs Troilus to go to the house of Deiphobus, plead an access of his fever for remaining all night, and keep his chamber next day. "Lo," says the crafty promoter of love, borrowing a phrase from the hunting-field; "Lo, hold thee at thy triste¹ close, and I shall well the deer unto thy bowe drive." Unsuspicious of stratagem, Cressida comes to dinner; and at table, Helen, Pandarus, and others, praise the absent Troilus, until "her heart laughs" for very pride that she has the love of such a knight. After dinner they speak of Cressida's business; all confirm Deiphobus' assurances of protection and aid; and Pandarus suggests that, since Troilus is there, Cressida shall herself tell him her case. Helen and Deiphobus alone accompany Pandarus to Troilus' chamber; there Troilus produces some documents relating to the public weal, which Hector has sent for his opinion; Helen and Deiphobus, engrossed in perusal and discussion, roam out of the chamber, by a stair, into the garden; while Pandarus goes down to the hall, and, pretending that his brother and Helen are still with Troilus, brings Cressida to her lover. The Second Book leaves Pandarus whispering in his niece's ear counsel to be merciful and kind to her lover, that hath for her such pain; while Troilus lies "in a kankerdort,"² hearing the whispering without, and wondering what he shall say—for this "was the first time that he should her pray of love; O! mighty God! what shall he say?"

THE THIRD BOOK.

To the Third Book is prefixed a beautiful invocation of Venus, under the character of light:

O BLISSFUL light, of which the beamēs clear
Adornen all the thirdē heaven fair!
O Sunnē's love, O Jovē's daughter dear!
Pleasance of love, O goodly debonair,³
In gentle hearts ay ready to repair!⁴
O very⁵ cause of heal⁶ and of gladnēss,
Y-heried⁷ be thy might and thy goodnēss!

In heav'n and hell, in earth and saltē sea,
Is felt thy might, if that I well discern;
As man, bird, beast, fish, herb, and greenē tree,
They feel in timēs, with vapour etern,⁸
God loveth, and to love he will not wern;⁹

¹ Tryst; a preconcerted spot to which the beaters drove the game, and at which the sportsmen waited with their bows.

² A condition or fit of perplexed anxiety; probably connected with the word "kink," meaning in sea phrase a twist in an rope—and, as a verb, to twist or entangle.

³ Lovely and gracious.

⁴ Ever ready to enter and abide in gentle hearts.

⁵ True.

⁶ Welfare.

⁷ Praised.

⁸ They feel in their seasons, by the emission of an eternal breath or inspiration (that God loves, &c.)

⁹ Forbid.

¹⁰ The idea of this stanza is the same with that developed in the speech of Theseus at the close of The Knight's Tale; and it is probably derived from the lines of Boethius, quoted in note 3, page 46.

¹¹ Pleasure.

¹² Seize.

And in this world no living creatūre
Withoutē love is worth, or may endure.¹⁰

Ye Jovē first to those effectēs glad,
Through which that thingēs allē live and be,
Commended; and him amorous y-made
Of mortal thing; and as ye list, ay ye
Gave him, in love, ease¹¹ or adversity,
And in a thousand formēs down him sent
For love in earth; and whom ye list ye hent.¹²

Ye fiercē Mars appeasen of his ire,
And as you list ye makē heartēs dign;¹³
Algatēs¹⁴ them that ye will set afire,
They dreadē shame, and vices they resign;
Ye do¹⁵ him courteous to be, and benign;
And high or low, after¹⁶ a wight intendeth,
The joyēs that he hath your might him sendeth.

Ye holdē realm and house in unity;
Ye soothfast¹⁷ cause of friendship be alsō;
Ye know all thilkē cover'd quality¹⁸
Of thingēs which that folk on wonder so,
When they may not construe how it may go
She loveth him, or why he loveth her,
As why this fish, not that, comes to the weir.¹⁹

Knowing that Venus has set a law in the universe, that whoso strives with her shall have the worse, the poet prays to be taught to describe some of the joy that is felt in her service; and the Third Book opens with an account of the scene between Troilus and Cressida:

Lay all this meanē whilē Troilus
Recording²⁰ his lessōn in this mannere;
"My fay!"²¹ thought he, "thus will I say, and
thus;

Thus will I plain²² unto my lady dear;
That word is good; and this shall be my cheer;
This will I not forgotten in no wise;
God let him worken as he can devise.

And, Lord! so as his heart began to quap,²³
Hearing her coming, and short for to sike;²⁴
And Pandarus, that led her by the lap,²⁵
Came near, and gan in at the curtain pick,²⁶
And saidē: "God do boot on²⁷ allē sick!
See who is here you coming to visite;
Lo! here is she that is your death to wite!"²⁸

Therewith it seemed as he wept almōst.
"Ah! ah! God help!" quoth Troilus ruefully;
"Whe'er²⁹ me be woe, O mighty God, thou
know'st!
Who is there? for I see not truēly."

¹³ Worthy. In this and the following lines reappears the noble doctrine of the exalting and purifying influence of true love, advanced in "The Court of Love," "The Cuckoo and the Nightingale," &c.

¹⁴ At all events.

¹⁵ Make, cause.

¹⁶ According as.

¹⁷ True.

¹⁸ That secret power or quality.

¹⁹ A trap or enclosed place in a stream, for catching fish. See note 1, page 218.

²⁰ Conning, committing to memory.

²¹ By my faith!

²² Make my plaint.

²³ Quake, pant.

²⁴ To heave short, interrupted sighs.

²⁵ Skirt of the garment.

²⁶ Or "pike;" peep.

²⁷ Afford a remedy to.

²⁸ That is to blame for your death.

²⁹ Whether.

"Sir," quoth Cressida, "it is Pandare and I ;"
 "Yea, sweetē heart? alas, I may not rise
 To kneel and do you honour in some wise."

And dressed him upwārd, and she right tho¹
 Gan both her handēs soft upon him lay.
 "O! for the love of God, do ye not so
 To me," quoth she; "ey! what is this to say?
 For come I am to you for causes tway;²
 First you to thank, and of your lordship³ eke
 Continuance I wouldē you beseeke."⁴

This Troilus, that heard his lady pray
 Him of lordship, wax'd neither quick nor dead;
 Nor might one word for shamē to it say,⁵
 Although men shouldē smiten off his head.
 But, Lord! how he wax'd suddenly all red!
 And, Sir, his lesson, that he ween'd have con,⁶
 To prayē her, was through his wit y-run.

Cressida all this espied well enow,—
 For she was wise,—and lov'd him ne'er the less,
 All n'ere he malapert,⁷ nor made avow,⁸
 Nor was so bold to sing a fool's mass;⁹
 But, when his shame began somewhat to pass,
 His wordēs, as I may my rhymēs hold,
 I will you tell, as teachē bookēs old.

In changed voice, right for his very dread,
 Which voice eke quak'd, and also his mannere
 Goodly¹⁰ abash'd, and now his hue is red,
 Now pale, unto Cressida, his lady dear,
 With look downcast, and humble yelden¹¹
 cheer,

Lo! altherfirstē word that him astert,¹²
 Was twicē: "Mercy, mercy, my dear heart!"

And stent¹³ a while; and when he might out
 bring,¹⁴
 The nextē was: "God wotē, for I have,
 As farforthly as I havē conning,¹⁵
 Been yourēs all, God so my soulē save,
 And shall, till that I, woeful wight, be grave;¹⁶
 And though I dare not, cannot, to you plain,
 Y-wis, I suffer not the lessē pain.

"This much as now, O womanlikē wife!
 I may out bring,¹⁴ and if it you displease,
 That shall I wreak¹⁷ upon mine ownē life,
 Right soon, I trow, and do your heart an ease,
 If with my death your heart I may appease:
 But, since that ye have heard me somewhat say,
 Now reck I never how soon that I dey."¹⁸

Therewith his manly sorrow to behold
 It might have made a heart of stone to rue;
 And Pandare wept as he to water wo'ld,¹⁹

¹ Then.

² Two.

³ Protection.

⁴ Beseech from you.

⁵ Nor could he answer one word for shame (at the stratagem that brought Cressida to implore his protection).

⁶ Known by heart.

⁷ Though he was not over-forward.

⁸ Confession (of his love).

⁹ That is, to be rash and ill-advised in his declarations of love and worship.

¹⁰ Becomingly.

¹¹ Yielded, submissive.

¹² The first word of all that escaped him.

¹³ Stopped.

¹⁴ Express.

¹⁵ As far as I am able.

¹⁶ Buried.

¹⁷ Avenge.

¹⁸ Die.

¹⁹ As if he would turn to water; so, in The Squire's Tale, did Canace weep for the woes of the falcon (note 10, page 120).

²⁰ In woeful plight.

²¹ Urged, prompted.

And saidē, "Woe-begone²⁰ be heartēs true,"
 And procur'd²¹ his niece ever new and new,
 "For love of Goddē, make of him an end,²²
 Or slay us both at onēs, ere we wend."²³

"Ey! what?" quoth she; "by God and by
 my truth,
 I know not what ye wouldē that I say;"
 "Ey! what?" quoth he; "that ye have on
 him ruth,²⁴

For Goddē's love, and do him not to dey."²⁵
 "Now thennē thus," quoth she, "I would him
 pray

To tellē me the fine of his intent;²⁶
 Yet wist I never²⁷ well what that he meant."

"What that I meanē, sweetē heartē dear?"
 Quoth Troilus, "O goodly, fresh, and free!
 That, with the streamēs²⁷ of your eyne so clear,
 Ye wouldē sometimes on me rue and see,²⁸
 And then agreē²⁹ that I may be he,
 Withoutē branch of vice, in any wise,
 In truth alway to do you my service,

"As to my lady chief, and right resort,
 With all my wit and all my diligence;
 And for to have, right as you list, comfort;
 Under your yerd,³⁰ equal to mine offence,
 As death,³¹ if that I breakē your defence;³²
 And that ye deignē me so much honoūr,
 Me to commanden aught in any hour.

"And I to be your very humble, true,
 Secret, and in my painēs³³ patiēt,
 And evermore desirē, freshly new,
 To serven, and be alike diligent,
 And, with good heart, all wholly your talēt³⁴
 Receive in gree,³⁵ how sorē that me smart;
 Lo, this mean I, mine owen sweetē heart."

With that she gan her eyen on him cast,
 Full easily and full debonairly,³⁶
 Advising her, and hied not too fast,³⁷
 With ne'er a word, but said him softēly,
 "Mine honour safe, I will well truēly,
 And in such form as ye can now devise,
 Receivē him³⁸ fully to my service;

"Beseeching him, for Goddē's love, that he
 Would, in honoūr of truth and gentleness,
 As I well mean, eke meanē well to me;
 And mine honoūr, with wit and business,³⁹
 Aye keep; and if I may do him gladnēs,
 From hencēforth, y-wis I will not feign:
 Now be all whole, no longer do ye plain.

²² Put him out of pain, by granting his desire.

²³ Go.

²⁴ Pity.

²⁵ Sum, end, of his desire.

²⁶ Never hitherto knew I.

²⁷ Beams, glances.

²⁸ Have pity and look.

²⁹ Take it in good part, vouchsafe.

³⁰ Correction, chastisement.

³¹ Even were it death.

³² If I transgress in whatever you may forbid; French, "defendre," to prohibit.

³³ Sufferings.

³⁴ Inclination, will.

³⁵ With gladness, in good part.

³⁶ Full softly and full graciously.

³⁷ Bethinking her, and not making too great haste.

³⁸ Troilus. These lines and the succeeding stanza are addressed to Pandarus, who had interposed some words of incitement to Cressida.

³⁹ Wisdom and zeal.

"But, natheless, this warn I you," quoth she,
 "A king's son although ye be, y-wis,
 Ye shall no more have sovereignty
 Of me in love, than right in this case is;
 Nor will I forbear, if ye do amiss,
 To wrathē you,¹ and, while that ye me
 serve,

To cherish you, right after ye deserve.²

"And shortly, dearē heart, and all my knight,
 Be glad, and drawē you to lustiness,³
 And I shall truēly, with all my might,
 Your bitter turnen all to sweetēness;
 If I be she that may do you gladnēss,
 For ev'ry woe ye shall recover a bliss:"
 And him in armēs took, and gan him kiss.

Pandarus, almost beside himself for joy, falls
 on his knees to thank Venus and Cupid, de-
 claring that for this miracle he hears all the
 bells ring; then, with a warning to be ready at
 his call to meet at his house, he parts the lovers,
 and attends Cressida while she takes leave of
 the household—Troilus all the time groaning at
 the deceit practised on his brother and Helen.
 When he has got rid of them by feigning weariness,
 Pandarus returns to the chamber, and
 spends the night with him in converse. The
 zealous friend begins to speak "in a sober wise"
 to Troilus, reminding him of his love-pains now
 all at an end.

"So that through me thou standest now in
 way

To farē well;⁴ I say it for no boast;
 And know'st thou why? For, shame it is to say,
 For thee have I begun a game to play,
 Which that I never shall do eft⁵ for other,⁶
 Although he were a thousand fold my brother.

"That is to say, for thee I am become,
 Betwixtē game and earnest, such a mean⁷
 As makē women unto men to come;
 Thou know'st thyselfē what that wouldē mean;
 For thee have I my niece, of vices clean,⁸
 So fully made thy gentleness⁹ to trust,
 That all shall be right as thyselfē lust.¹⁰

"But God, that all wot, take I to witness,
 That never this for covetise¹¹ I wrought,
 But only to abridgē¹² thy distress,
 For which well nigh thou diedst, as me thought;
 But, goodē brother, do now as thee ought,
 For Goddē's love, and keep her out of blame;
 Since thou art wise, so savē thou her name.

"For, well thou know'st, the namē yet of her,
 Among the people, as who saith¹³ hallow'd is;
 For that man is unborn, I dare well swear,

¹ Be angry with you, chide you.

² According to your desert.

³ Pleasantness.

⁴ In a fair way to be prosperous (in love).

⁵ Again.

⁶ Another.

⁷ An instrument; a procurer.

⁸ Pure, devoid.

⁹ Nobleness of nature.

¹⁰ As thou wilt.

¹¹ Greed of gain.

¹² Out short, abate.

¹³ As who should say; as it were.

¹⁴ Her uncle and betrayer both in one.

¹⁵ Arts, contrivance.

¹⁶ Fancy.

¹⁷ Pleasure.

That ever yet wist that she did amiss;
 But woe is me, that I, that cause all this,
 May thinkē that she is my niecē dear,
 And I her eme, and traitor eke y-fere.¹⁴

"And were it wist that I, through mine
 engine,¹⁵

Had in my niecē put this fantasy¹⁶
 To do thy lust,¹⁷ and wholly to be thine,
 Why, all the people would upon it cry,
 And say, that I the worstē treachery
 Did in this case, that ever was begun,
 And she fordene, and thou right naught
 y-won."¹⁸

Therefore, ere going a step further, Pandarus
 prays Troilus to give him pledges of secrecy,
 and impresses on his mind the mischiefs that
 flow from vaunting in affairs of love. "Of
 kind,"¹⁹ he says, no vaunter is to be believed:

"For a vaunter and a liar all is one;
 As thus: I pose²⁰ a woman granteth me
 Her love, and saith that other will she none,
 And I am sworn to holden it secrē,
 And, after, I go tell it two or three;
 Y-wis, I am a vaunter, at the least,
 And eke a liar, for I break my heet.²¹

"Now lookē then, if they be not to blame,
 Such manner folk; what shall I call them,
 what?

That them avaunt of women, and by name,
 That never yet behight²² them this nor that,
 Nor knowē them no more than mine old hat?
 No wonder is, so God me sendē heal,²³
 Though women dreadē with us men to deal!

"I say not this for no mistrust of you,
 Nor for no wise men, but for foolēs nice;²⁴
 And for the harm that in the world is now,
 As well for folly oft as for malice;
 For well wot I, that in wise folk that vice
 No woman dreads, if she be well advised;
 For wise men be by foolēs' harm chastised."²⁵

So Pandarus begs Troilus to keep silent, pro-
 mises to be true all his days, and assures him
 that he shall have all that he will in the love of
 Cressida: "thou knowest what thy lady granted
 thee; and day is set the charters up to make."

Who mightē tellē half the joy and feast
 Which that the soul of Troilus then felt,
 Hearing th' effect of Pandarus' behest?
 His oldē woe, that made his heartē swelt,²⁶
 Gan then for joy to wasten and to melt,
 And all the reheating²⁷ of his sighēs sore
 At onēs fied, he felt of them no more.

¹⁸ She would be ruined, and thou wouldst have won nothing.

¹⁹ By his very nature.

²⁰ Suppose, assume.

²¹ Promise. In "The Court of Love," the poet says of Avaunter, that "his ancestry of kin was to Lier; and the stanza in which that line occurs (page 209) expresses precisely the same idea as in the text. Vain boasters of ladies' favours are also satirised in "The House of Fame;" page 243.

²² Prosperity.

²³ Promised (—much less granted).

²⁴ Silly, stupid; French, "niais."

²⁵ Corrected, instructed.

²⁶ Faint, die.

²⁷ The hotness: "reheating" is read by preference for "richesse," which stands in the older printed

But right so as these holtēs and these hayēs,¹
That have in winter deadē been and dry,
Revestē them in greenē, when that May is,
When ev'ry lusty listeth best to play;²
Right in that selfē wisē, sooth to say,
Wax'd suddenly his heartē full of joy,
That gladder was there never man in Troy.

Troilus solemnly swears that never, "for all the good that God made under sun," will he reveal what Pandarus asks him to keep secret; offering to die a thousand times, if need were, and to follow his friend as a slave all his life, in proof of his gratitude.

"But here, with all my heart, I thee beseech,
That never in me thou deemē such folly³
As I shall say; me thoughtē, by thy speech,
That this which thou me dost for company,⁴
I shouldē ween it were a bawdery;
I am not wood, all if I lewēd be;⁵
It is not one,⁶ that wot I well, pardie!

"But he that goes for gold, or for richēs,
On such messāges, call him as thee lust;
And this that thou dost, call it gentleness,
Compassiōn, and fellowship, and trust;
Depart⁷ it so, for widēwhere is wist⁸
How that there is diversity requer'd
Betwixtē thingēs like, as I have lear'd.⁹

"And that thou know I think it not nor ween,¹⁰
That this service a shame be or a jape,¹¹
I have my fairē sister Polyxene,
Cassandr', Helēne, or any of the frape;¹²
Be she never so fair, or well y-shape,
Tellē me which thou wilt of ev'ry one,
To have for thine, and let me then alone."¹³

Then, beseeching Pandarus soon to perform out the great emprise of crowning his love for Cressida, Troilus bade his friend good night. On the morrow Troilus burned as the fire, for hope and pleasure; yet "he not forgot his wisē governance;"¹⁴

But in himself with manhood gan restrain
Each rakel¹⁵ deed, and each unbridled cheer,¹⁶
That allē those that livē, sooth to sayn,
Should not have wist, by word or by mannere,
What that he meant, as touching this mattēre;
From ev'ry wight as far as is the cloud
He was, so well dissimulate he could.

And all the while that I now devise,¹⁷
This was his life: with all his fullē might,
By day he was in Martē's high service,

editions; though "richesse" certainly better represents the word used in the original of Boccaccio—"dovizia," meaning abundance or wealth.

- ¹ Woods or groves, and hedges.
² When it best pleases every pleasant (wight, thing) to sport.
³ Judge such folly (to exist).
⁴ Camradeship, friendship.
⁵ I am not mad, although I may be unlearned.
⁶ It is not a bawd's act.
⁷ Make this distinction.
⁸ It is universally known. ⁹ Learned.
¹⁰ Suppose. ¹¹ A subject for jeering.
¹² The set, or company; French, "frappe," a stamp (on coins), a set (of moulds).
¹³ To accomplish thy desire.

That is to say, in armēs as a knight;
And, for the mostē part, the longē night
He lay, and thought how that he mightē serve
His lady best, her thank¹⁸ for to deserve.

I will not swear, although he layē soft,
That in his thought he n' as somewhat diseas'd;¹⁹
Nor that he turned on his pillows oft,
And would of that him missed have been seis'd;²⁰
But in such case men be not alway pleas'd,
For aught I wot, no morē than was he;
That can I deem²¹ of possibility.

But certain is, to purpose for to go,
That in this while, as written is in gest,²²
He saw his lady sometimes, and alsō
She with him spake, when that she durst and
lest;²³

And, by their both advice,²⁴ as was the best,
Appointed full warily²⁵ in this need,
So as they durst, how far they would proceed.

But it was spoken in so short a wise,
In such await alway, and in such fear,²⁶
Lest any wight divinen or devise²⁷
Would of their speech, or to it lay an ear,
That all this world them not so lefē²⁸ were,
As that Cupido would them gracē send
To maken of their speeches right an end.

But thilkē²⁹ little that they spake or wrought,
His wisē ghost³⁰ took ay of all such heed,
It seemed her he wistē what she thought
Withoutē word, so that it was no need
To bid him aught to do, nor aught forbid;
For which she thought that love, all came it late,
Of allē joy had open'd her the gate.³¹

Troilus, by his discretion, his secrecy, and his devotion, made ever a deeper lodgment in Cressida's heart; so that she thanked God twenty thousand times that she had met with a man who, as she felt, "was to her a wall of steel, and shield from ev'ry displeasānce;" while Pandarus ever actively fanned the fire. So passed a "timē sweet" of tranquil and harmonious love; the only drawback being, that the lovers might not often meet, "nor leisure have, their speeches to fulfil." At last Pandarus found an occasion for bringing them together at his house unknown to anybody, and put his plan in execution.

For he, with great deliberatiōn,
Had ev'ry thing that hereto might avail³²
Forecast, and put in executiōn,
And neither left³³ for cost nor for travāil;³⁴
Come if them list, them shouldē nothing fail,

- ¹⁴ Control (of himself). ¹⁵ Rash, ill-advised.
¹⁶ Gesture, demeanour. ¹⁷ Of which I now tell.
¹⁸ Grateful favour. ¹⁹ Was not somewhat troubled.
²⁰ Would fain have possessed that which he missed—that is, his lady. ²¹ Judge.
²² In the history of the events. ²³ Pleased.
²⁴ Consultation, opinion.
²⁵ Made very careful preparations or resolves.
²⁶ So briefly, with so much vigilance, and in such fear (of observation).
²⁷ Conjecture or divine. ²⁸ Dear.
²⁹ That. ³⁰ Spirit.
³¹ Love, though late come, had opened to her the gate of all joy.
³² Be of service, aid.
³³ Left anything undone. ³⁴ Labour.

Nor for to be in aught espied there,
That wistē he an impossible were.¹

And dreadless² it clear was in the wind
Of ev'ry pie, and every let-game;³
Now all is well, for all this world is blind,
In this matterē, bothē fremd and tame;⁴
This timber is all ready for to frame;
Us lacketh naught, but that we weetē wo'ld⁵
A certain hour in which we comē sho'ld.

Troilus had informed his household, that if at any time he was missing, he had gone to worship at a certain temple of Apollo, "and first to see the holy laurel quake, or that the goddē spake out of the tree." So, at the changing of the moon, when "the welkin shope him for to rain,"⁶ Pandarus went to invite his niece to supper; solemnly assuring her that Troilus was out of the town—though all the time he was safely shut up, till midnight, in "a little stew," whence through a hole he joyously watched the arrival of his mistress and her fair niece Antigone, with half a score of her women. After supper Pandarus did everything to amuse his niece; "he sung, he play'd, he told a tale of Wade;"⁷ at last she would take her leave; but

The bentē Moonē with her hornēs pale,
Saturn, and Jove, in Cancer joined were,⁸
That madē such a rain from heav'n avail,⁹
That ev'ry manner woman that was there
Had of this smoky¹⁰ rain a very fear;
At which Pandarus laugh'd, and saidē then,
"Now were it time a lady to go hen!"¹¹

He therefore presses Cressida to remain all night; she complies with a good grace; and after the sleeping cup has gone round, all retire to their chambers—Cressida, that she may not be disturbed by the rain and thunder, being lodged in the "inner closet" of Pandarus, who, to lull suspicion, occupies the outer chamber, his niece's women sleeping in the intermediate apartment. When all is quiet, Pandarus liberates Troilus, and by a secret passage brings him to the chamber of Cressida; then, going forward alone to his niece, after calming her fears of discovery, he tells her that her lover has "through a gutter, by a privy went,"¹² come to his house in all this rain, mad with grief because a friend has told him that she loves Horastes. Suddenly cold about her heart, Cressida promises that on the morrow she will reassure her lover; but Pandarus scouts the

notion of delay, laughs to scorn her proposal to send her ring in pledge of her truth, and finally, by pitiable accounts of Troilus' grief, induces her to receive him and reassure him at once with her own lips.

This Troilus full soon on knees him set,
Full soberly, right by her beddē's head,
And in his bestē wise his lady gret;¹³
But Lord! how she wax'd suddenly all red,
And thought anon how that she would be dead;
She couldē not one word aright out bring,
So suddenly for his sudden coming.

Cressida, though thinking that her servant and her knight should not have doubted her truth, yet sought to remove his jealousy, and offered to submit to any ordeal or oath he might impose; then, weeping, she covered her face, and lay silent. "But now," exclaims the poet—

But now help, God, to quenchen all this
sorrow!
So hope I that he shall, for he best may;
For I have seen, of a full misty morrow,¹⁴
Followen oft a merry summer's day,
And after winter cometh greenē May;
Folk see all day, and eke men read in stories,
That after sharpē stourēs¹⁵ be victories.

Believing his mistress to be angry, Troilus felt the cramp of death seize on his heart, "and down he fell all suddenly in swoon." Pandarus "into bed him cast," and called on his niece to pull out the thorn that stuck in his heart, by promising that she would "all forgive." She whispered in his ear the assurance that she was not wroth; and at last, under her caresses, he recovered consciousness, to find her arm laid over him, to hear the assurance of her forgiveness, and receive her frequent kisses. Fresh vows and explanations passed; and Cressida implored forgiveness of "her own sweet heart," for the pain she had caused him. Surprised with sudden bliss, Troilus put all in God's hand, and strained his lady fast in his arms. "What might or may the seely¹⁶ larkē say, when that the sperhawk¹⁷ hath him in his foot?"

Cressida, which that felt her thus y-take,
As writē clerkēs in their bookēs old,
Right as an aspen leaf began to quake,
When she him felt her in his armēs fold;
But Troilus, all whole of carēs cold,¹⁸
Gan thankē then the blissful goddēs seven.¹⁹
Thus sundry painēs bringē folk to heaven.

¹ And he knew that it was impossible that they could be discovered there. ² Without doubt.

³ To be "in the wind" of noisy magpies, or other birds that might spoil sport by alarming the game, was not less desirable than to be on the "lee-side" of the game itself, that the hunter's presence might not be betrayed by the scent. "In the wind of," thus signifies not to windward of, but to leeward of—that is, in the wind that comes from the object of pursuit.

⁴ Both foes and friends—literally, both wild and tame, the sporting metaphor being sustained.

⁵ The lovers are supposed to say, that nothing is wanting but to know the time at which they should meet.

⁶ When the sky was preparing to rain.

⁷ See note 16, page 106.

⁸ A conjunction that imported rain.

⁹ Descend.

¹⁰ An admirably graphic description of dense rain.

¹¹ Hence.

¹² Secret way or passage.

¹³ Greeted.

¹⁴ Morn.

¹⁵ Conflicts, struggles.

¹⁶ Innocent, harmless.

¹⁷ Sparrowhawk.

¹⁸ Entirely healed from his painful sorrows. For the force of "cold," see note 2, page 100.

¹⁹ The divinities who gave their names to the seven planets, which, in association with the seven metals, are mentioned in The Canon's Yeoman's Tale, page 180.

This Troilus her gan in armēs strain,
And said, "O sweet, as ever may I go'n,¹
Now be ye caught, now here is but we twain,
Now yieldē you, for other boot² is none."
To that Cresside answered thus anon,
"N' had I ere now, my sweetē heartē dear,
Been yolden,³ y-wis, I werē now not here!"

O sooth is said, that healed for to be
Of a fever, or other great sicknēss,
Men mustē drink, as we may often see,
Full bitter drink; and for to have gladnēss
Men drinken often pain and great distress!
I mean it here, as for this adventūre,
That thorough pain hath founden all his cure.

And now sweetnessē seemeth far more sweet,
That bitterness assayed⁴ was beforē;
For out of woe in blissē now they fleet,⁵
None such they feltē since that they were born;
Now is it better than both two were lorn!⁶
For love of God, take ev'ry woman heed
To workē thus, if it come to the need!

Cresside, all quit from ev'ry dread and teen,⁷
As she that justē cause had him to trust,
Made him such feast,⁸ it joy was for to see'n,
When she his truth and intent cleanē wist;⁹
And as about a tree, with many a twist,
Bitrent and writhen¹⁰ is the sweet woodbind,
Gan each of them in armēs other wind.¹¹

And as the new abashed nightingale,¹²
That stinteth,¹³ first when she beginneth sing,
When that she heareth any herdē's tale,¹⁴
Or in the hedges any wight stirring;
And, after, sicker¹⁵ out her voice doth ring;
Right so Cressida, when her dreadē stent,¹⁶
Open'd her heart, and told him her intent.¹⁷

And right as he that sees his death y-shapen,¹⁸
And dien must, in aught that he may guess,¹⁹
And suddenly rescouse doth him escapen,²⁰
And from his death is brought in sickness;²¹
For all the world, in such present gladnēss
Was Troilus, and had his lady sweet;
With worsē hap God let us never meet!

Her armēs small, her straightē back and soft,
Her sidēs longē, fleshly, smooth, and white,
He gan to stroke; and good thrift²² bade full oft
On her snow-white throat, her breastēs round
and lite;²³

Thus in this heaven he gan him delight,

¹ Prosper.

² Remedy, resource.

³ If I had not yielded myself ere now.

⁴ Experienced, tasted. See note 8, page 116.

⁵ Float, swim.

⁶ Better this happy issue, than that both two should be lost (through the sorrow of fruitless love).

⁷ Freed from every doubt and pain.

⁸ "Lui fit fête"—made holiday for him.

⁹ Knew his truth and the purity of his purpose.

¹⁰ Plaited and wreathed. ¹¹ Embrace, encircle.

¹² The newly-arrived and timid nightingale.

¹³ Stops.

¹⁴ The talking of any shepherd.

¹⁵ With confidence; clearly and surely.

¹⁶ When her doubt had ceased to affect her.

¹⁷ Mind.

¹⁸ Prepared.

¹⁹ For all that he can tell.

²⁰ Rescue causeth him to escape.

²¹ Safety.

²² Blessing, prosperity.

²³ Small.

²⁴ He hardly knew.

²⁵ The cock is called, in "The Assembly of Fowls,"

And therewithal a thousand times her kist,
That what to do for joy unneth he wist.²⁴

The lovers exchanged vows, and kisses, and embraces, and speeches of exalted love, and rings; Cressida gave to Troilus a brooch of gold and azure, "in which a ruby set was like a heart;" and the too short night passed.

"When that the cock, commune astrologer,²⁵
Gan on his breast to beat, and after crow,
And Lucifer, the dayē's messenger,
Gan for to rise, and out his beamēs throw;
And eastward rose, to him that could it know,
Fortuna Major,²⁶ then anon Cresseide,
With heartē sore, to Troilus thus said:

"My heartē's life, my trust, and my plea-
sance!

That I was born, alas! that me is woe,
That day of us must make disseverance!
For time it is to rise, and hence to go,
Or else I am but lost for evermo'.
O Night! alas! why n' ilt thou o'er us hove,²⁷
As long as when Alcmena lay by Jove?²⁸

"O blackē Night! as folk in bookēs read,
That shapen²⁹ art by God, this world to hide,
At certain timēs, with thy darkē weed,³⁰
That under it men might in rest abide,
Well oughtē beastēs plain, and folkē chide,
That where as Day with labour would us brest,³¹
There thou right flee'st, and deignest³² not us
rest.

"Thou dost, alas! so shortly thine office,³³
Thou rakel³⁴ Night! that God,³⁵ maker of kind,
Thee for thy haste and thine unkindē vice,
So fast ay to our hemispherē bind,
That never more under the ground thou wind;³⁶
For through thy rakel hieing³⁷ out of Troy
Have I forgone³⁸ thus hastily my joy!"

This Troilus, that with these wordēs felt,
As thought him then, for piteous distress,
The bloody tearēs from his heartē melt,
As he that never yet such heaviness
Assayed had out of so great gladnēss,
Gan therewithal Cresside, his lady dear,
In armēs strain, and said in this mannere:

"O cruel Day! accuser of the joy
That Night and Love have stol'n, and fast y-
wrien!³⁹

Accursed be thy coming into Troy!

"the horologe of thorpēs lite;" and in The Nun's Priest's Tale Chanticleer knew by nature each ascension of the equinoctial, and, when the sun had ascended fifteen degrees, "then crew he, that it might not be amended." Here he is termed the "common astrologer," as employing for the public advantage his knowledge of astronomy.

²⁶ The planet Jupiter.

²⁷ Why wilt not thou hover over us?

²⁸ When Jupiter visited Alcmena in the form of her husband Amphitryon, he is said to have prolonged the night to the length of three natural nights. Hercules was the fruit of the union.

²⁹ Appointed.

³⁰ Robe.

³¹ Burst, overcome.

³² Grantest.

³³ Performest thy duty in so short a time.

³⁴ Rash, hasty.

³⁵ Would that God would, &c.

³⁶ Turn, revolve.

³⁷ Hastening.

³⁸ Lost.

³⁹ Closely concealed.

For ev'ry bow'r¹ hath one of thy bright eyen :
 Envious Day! Why list thee to espyen?
 What hast thou lost? Why seekest thou this
 place?

There God thy light so quenchē, for his grace!

"Alas! what have these lovers thee aguilt?²
 Dispiteous³ Day, thine be the pains of hell!
 For many a lover hast thou alain, and wilt;
 Thy peering in will nowhere let them dwell:
 What! proff'rest thou thy light here for to sell?
 Go sell it them that smallē sealēs grave!⁴
 We will thee not, us needs no day to have."

And eke the Sunnē, Titan, gan he chide,
 And said, "O fool! well may men thee despise!
 That hast the Dawning⁵ all night thee beside,
 And suff'rest her so soon up from thee rise,
 For to disease⁶ us lovers in this wise!
 What! hold⁷ thy bed, both thou, and eke thy
 Morrow!

I biddē⁸ God so give you bothē sorrow!"

The lovers part with many sighs and protes-
 tations of unswerving and undying love; Cres-
 sida responding to the vows of Troilus with the
 assurance—

"That first shall Phœbus⁹ fallē from his
 sphere,

And heaven's eagle be the dovē's fere,
 And ev'ry rock out of his placē start,
 Ere Troilus out of Cressida's heart."

When Pandarus visits Troilus in his palace
 later in the day, he warns him not to mar his
 bliss by any fault of his own:

"For, of Fortūnē's sharp adversity,
 The worstē kind of infortune is this,
 A man to have been in prosperity,
 And it remember when it passed ia.¹⁰
 Thou art wise enough; forthy,¹¹ do not amiss;
 Be not too rakel,¹² though thou sittē warm;
 For if thou be, certain it will thee harm.

"Thou art at ease, and hold thee well therein;
 For, all so sure as red is ev'ry fire,
 As great a craft is to keep weal as win;¹³
 Bridle alway thy speech and thy desire,
 For worldly joy holds not but by a wire;
 That proveth well, it breaks all day so oft,
 Forthy need is to workē with it soft."

Troilus sedulously observes the counsel; and
 the lovers have many renewals of their pleasure,
 and of their bitter chidings of the Day. The
 effects of love on Troilus are altogether refin-

ing and ennobling; as may be inferred from the
 song which he sung often to Pandarus:

The Second Song of Troilus.

"Love, that of Earth and Sea hath governance!
 Love, that his hestēs¹⁴ hath in Heaven high!
 Love, that with a right wholesome alliaunce
 Holds people joined, as him list them guy!¹⁵
 Lovē, that knitteth law and company,
 And couples doth in virtue for to dwell,
 Bind this accord, that I have told, and tell!

"That the worldē, with faith which that is
 stable,
 Diverseth so, his stoundēs according;¹⁶
 That elementēs, that be discordable,¹⁷
 Holden a bond perpetually during;
 That Phœbus may his rosy day forth bring;
 And that the Moon hath lordship o'er the night;—
 All this doth Love, ay heried¹⁸ be his might!

"That the sea, which that greedy is to flowen,
 Constraineneth to a certain endē¹⁹ so
 His floodēs, that so fiercely they not growen
 To drenchen²⁰ earth and all for evermo';
 And if that Love aught let his bridle go,
 All that now loves asunder shouldē leap,
 And lost were all that Love holds now to heap."²¹

"So wouldē God, that author is of kind,
 That with his bond Love of his virtue list
 To cherish heartēs, and all fast to bind,
 That from his bond no wight the way out wist!
 And heartēs cold, them would I that he twist,²²
 To make them love; and that him list ay rue²³
 On heartēs sore, and keep them that be true."

But Troilus' love had higher fruits than
 singing:

In allē needēs for the townē's werre²⁴
 He was, and ay the first in armēs dight,²⁵
 And certainly, but if that bookēs err,
 Save Hector, most y-dread²⁶ of any wight;
 And this increase of hardiness²⁷ and might
 Came him of love, his lady's grace to win,
 That altered his spirit so within.

In time of truce, a-hawking would he ride,
 Or ellēs hunt the boarē, bear, lion;
 The smallē beastēs let he go beside;²⁸
 And when he came riding into the town,
 Full oft his lady, from her window down,
 As fresh as falcon coming out of mew,²⁹
 Full ready was him goodly to salve.³⁰

And most of love and virtue was his speech,
 And in despite he had all wretchedness;³¹

¹ Chamber. ² Offended, sinned against.
³ Cruel, spiteful. ⁴ That cut devices on small seals.
⁵ Chaucer seems to confound Titan, the title of the
 sun, with Tithonus (or Tithon, as contracted in poetry),
 whose couch Aurora was wont to share. ⁶ Annoy.
⁷ Keep. ⁸ Pray. ⁹ The Sun.
¹⁰ So, in "Locksley Hall," Tennyson says that "a
 sorrow's crown of sorrow is rememb'ring better things."
 The original is in Dante's words:

— "Nessun maggior dolore
 Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
 Nella miseria."—"Inferno," v. 121.

¹¹ Therefore. ¹² Rash, over-hasty.
¹³ It needs as much skill to keep prosperity as to
 attain it.

¹⁴ Commandments. ¹⁵ Guide.
¹⁶ Diversifieth so, according to its seasons.
¹⁷ That are in themselves discordant.
¹⁸ Praised. ¹⁹ Limit.
²⁰ Drown, submerge.
²¹ Together. See the reference to Boethius in note
 8, page 46. ²² Turned. ²³ Have pity.
²⁴ War. ²⁵ Equipped, prepared.
²⁶ Dreaded. ²⁷ Courage.
²⁸ A charming touch, indicative of the noble and
 generous inspiration of his love.
²⁹ The cage or chamber in which hawks were kept
 and carefully tended during the moulting season.
³⁰ Salute.
³¹ He held in scorn all despicable actions.

And doubtless no need was him to beseech
To honour them that haddē worthiness,
And easē them that weren in distress;
And glad was he, if any wight well far'd,
That lover was, when he it wist or heard.

For he held every man lost unless he were in
Love's service; and, so did the power of Love
work within him, that he was ay humble and
benign, and "pride, envy, ire, and avarice, he
gan to flee, and ev'ry other vice."

THE FOURTH BOOK.

A BRIEF Proem to the Fourth Book prepares us
for the treachery of Fortune to Troilus; from
whom she turned away her bright face, and
took of him no heed, "and cast him clean out
of his lady's grace, and on her wheel she set up
Diomedes." Then the narrative describes a
skirmish in which the Trojans were worsted,
and Antenor, with many of less note, remained
in the hands of the Greeks. A truce was pro-
claimed for the exchange of prisoners; and as
soon as Calchas heard the news, he came to the
assembly of the Greeks, to "bid a boon." Having
gained audience, he reminded the be-
siegiers how he had come from Troy to aid and
encourage them in their enterprise; willing to
lose all that he had in the city, except his
daughter Cressida, whom he bitterly reproached
himself for leaving behind. And now, with
streaming tears and pitiful prayer, he besought
them to exchange Antenor for Cressida; assuring
them that the day was at hand when they should
have both town and people. The soothsayer's
petition was granted; and the ambassadors
charged to negotiate the exchange, entering the
city, told their errand to King Priam and his
parliament.

This Troilus was present in the place
When asked was for Antenor Cresside;
For which to changē soon began his face,
As he that with the wordēs well nigh died;
But natheless he no word to it said;¹
Lest men should his affectiōn espy,
With mannē's heart he gan his sorrows drie;²

And, full of anguish and of grisly dread,
Abode what other lords would to it say,
And if they wouldē grant,—as God forbid!—
Th' exchange of her, then thought he thingēs
tway:³

First, for to save her honour; and what way
He mightē best th' exchange of her withstand;
This cast he then how all this mightē stand.

Love made him allē prest to do her bide,⁴
And rather die than that she shouldē go;
But Reason said him, on the other side,
"Without th' assent of her, do thou not so,
Lest for thy workē she would be thy foe;

¹ Said.

² Dree, endure.

³ Two.

⁴ All eager to make her remain (in the city).

⁵ Divulged, blown abroad.

⁶ The love of you both.

⁷ Formerly unknown.

⁸ What they pleased.

⁹ That is, according to her wish.

¹⁰ Speedily, with alacrity.

And say, that through thy meddling is y-blow⁵
Your bothē love,⁶ where it was erst unknow."⁷

For which he gan deliberate for the best,
That though the lordēs wouldē that she went,
He wouldē suffer them grant what them lest,⁸
And tell his lady first what that they meant;
And, when that she had told him her intent,
Thereafter⁹ would he worken all so blive,¹⁰
Though all the world against it wouldē strive.

Hector, which that full well the Greekēs heard,
For Antenor how they would have Cresseide,
Gan it withstand, and soberly answer'd;
"Sirs, she is no prisoner," [thus] he said;
"I know not on you who this chargē laid;
But, for my part, ye may well soon him tell,
We usē¹¹ here no women for to sell."

The noise of the people then upstart at once,
As breme¹² as blaze of straw y-set on fire;
For Infortunē¹³ wouldē for the nonce
They shouldē their confusiōn desire:

"Hector," quoth they, "what ghost¹⁴ may you
inspire

This woman thus to shield, and do¹⁵ us lose
Dan Antenor?—a wrong way now ye choose,—

"That is so wise, and eke so bold barōūn;
And we have need of folk, as men may see;
He eke is one the greatest of this town;
O Hector! lettē such fantāsies be!
O King Priām!" quoth they, "lo! thus say we,
That all our will is to forego Cresseide;"
And to deliver Antenor they pray'd.

Though Hector often prayed them "nay," it
was resolved that Cressida should be given up
for Antenor; then the parliament dispersed.
Troilus hastened home to his chamber, shut
himself up alone, and threw himself on his bed.

And as in winter leavēs be bereft,
Each after other, till the tree be bare,
So that there is but bark and branch y-left,
Lay Troilus, bereft of each welfāre,
Y-bounden in the blackē bark of care,
Disposed wood out of his wit to braid,¹⁶
So sore him sat¹⁷ the changing of Cresseide.

He rose him up, and ev'ry door he shet,¹⁸
And window eke; and then this sorrowful man
Upon his beddē's side adown him set,
Full like a dead imāgē, pale and wan,
And in his breast the heaped woe began
Out burst, and he to worken in this wise,
In his woodnēss,¹⁹ as I shall you devise.²⁰

Right as the wildē bull begins to spring,
Now here, now there, y-darted²¹ to the heart,
And of his death roareth in complaining;
Right so gan he about the chamber start,
Smiting his breast aye with his fistēs smart;²²
His head to the wall, his body to the ground,
Full oft he swapt,²³ himselfē to confound.

¹¹ Are used, accustomed.

¹² Violent, furious.

¹³ Misfortune.

¹⁴ Spirit.

¹⁵ Make.

¹⁶ To go out of his senses.

¹⁷ So ill did he bear.

¹⁸ Shut.

¹⁹ Madness.

²⁰ Relate.

²¹ Pierced with a dart.

²² Painfully, cruelly.

²³ Struck, dashed.

His eyen then, for pity of his heart,
Out streameden as swiftē wellēs¹ tway ;
The highē sobbēs of his sorrow's smart
His speech him reft ; unnethēs² might he say,
" O Death, alas ! why n'ilt thou do me dey ?³
Accursed be that day which that Nature
Shope⁴ me to be a living creatūre ! "

Bitterly reviling Fortune, and calling on Love
to explain why his happiness with Cressida
should be thus repealed, Troilus declares that,
while he lives, he will bewail his misfortune
in solitude, and will never see it shine or rain,
but will end his sorrowful life in darkness, and
die in distress.

" O weary ghost, that errest to and fro !
Why n'ilt⁵ thou fly out of the woofulest
Body that ever might on groundē go ?
O soulē, lurking in this woeful nest !
Flee forth out of my heart, and let it brest,⁶
And follow alway Cresside, thy lady dear !
Thy rightē place is now no longer here.

" O woeful eyen two ! since your disport⁷
Was all to see Cressida's eyen bright,
What shall ye do, but, for my discomfort,
Standē for naught, and weepen out your sight,
Since she is quenched, that wont was you to
light ?

In vain, from this forth, have I eyen tway
Y-formed, since your virtue is away !

" O my Cresside ! O lady sovereign
Of thilkē⁸ woeful soulē that now cryeth !
Who shall now givē comfort to thy pain ?
Alas ! no wight ; but, when my heartē dieth,
My spirit, which that so unto you hieth,⁹
Receive in gree,¹⁰ for that shall ay you serve ;
Forthy no force is¹¹ though the body starve.¹²

" O ye lovers, that high upon the wheel
Be set of Fortune, in good adventūre,
God lenē¹³ that ye find ay love of steel,¹⁴
And longē may your life in joy endure !
But when ye comē by my sepulture,¹⁵
Remember that your fellow resteth there ;
For I lov'd eke, though I unworthy were.

" O old, unwholesome, and mialived man,
Calchas I mean, alas ! what ailed thee
To be a Greek, since thou wert born Trojān ?
O Calchas ! which that will my banē¹⁶ be,
In cursēd timē wert thou born for me !
As wouldē blissful Jovē, for his joy,
That I thee haddē where I would in Troy ! "

Soon Troilus, through excess of grief, fell
into a trance ; in which he was found by Pan-
darus, who had gone almost distracted at the
news that Cressida was to be exchanged for

Antenor. At his friend's arrival, Troilus "gan
as the snow against the sun to melt ;" the two
mingled their tears a while ; then Pandarus
strove to comfort the woeful lover. He ad-
mitted that never had a stranger ruin than this
been wrought by Fortune :

" But tell me this, why thou art now so mad
To sorrow thus ? Why li'st thou in this wise,
Since thy desire all wholly hast thou had,
So that by right it ought enough suffice ?
But I, that never felt in my service¹⁷
A friendly cheer or looking of an eye,
Let me thus weep and wail until I die.

" And over all this, as thou well wost¹⁸ thy-
selve,
This town is full of ladies all about,
And, to my doom,¹⁹ fairer than suchē twelve
As ever she was, shall I find in some rout,²⁰
Yea ! one or two, withouten any doubt :
Forthy²¹ be glad, mine owen dearē brother !
If she be lost, we shall recover another.

" What ! God forbid alway that each pleasānce
In one thing were, and in none other wight ;
If one can sing, another can well dance ;
If this be goodly, she is glad and light ;
And this is fair, and that can good²² aright ;
Each for his virtue holden is full dear,
Both heroner, and falcon for rivēre.²³

" And eke as writ Zausis,²⁴ that was full wise,
The newē love out chaseth oft the old,
And upon new case lieth new advice ;²⁵
Think eke thy life to savē thou art hold ;²⁶
Such fire by process shall of kindē cold ;²⁷
For, since it is but casual pleasānce,
Some case²⁸ shall put it out of remembrance.

" For, all so sure as day comes after night,
The newē love, labour, or other woe,
Or ellēs seldom seeing of a wight,
Do old affectiōns all over go ;²⁹
And for thy part, thou shalt have one of tho³⁰
T' abridgē with thy bitter painē's smart ;
Absence of her shall drive her out of heart."

These wordēs said he for the nonēs all,³¹
To help his friend, lest he for sorrow died ;
For, doubtlēss, to do his woe to fall,³²
He raughtē³³ not what unthrift³⁴ that he said ;
But Troilus, that nigh for sorrow died,
Took little heed of all that ever he meant ;
One ear it heard, at th' other out it went.

But, at the last, he answer'd and said, " Friend,
This leachcraft, or y-healed thus to be,
Were well sitting³⁵ if that I were a fiend,
To traisen³⁶ her that true is unto me ;

²³ That is, each is esteemed for a special virtue or
faculty, as the large gersaloon for the chase of heron,
the smaller gohawk for the chase of river fowl.

²⁴ An author of whom no record survives.

²⁵ New counsels must be adopted as new circum-
stances arise.

²⁶ Bound.

²⁷ Shall grow cold by process of nature.

²⁸ Chance.

²⁹ Overcome.

³⁰ One of those (means of alleviation).

³¹ Only for the nonce.

³² To cause his woe to subside.

³³ Recked.

³⁴ Folly.

³⁵ Becoming.

³⁶ Betray.

¹ Fountains.

² Scarcely.

³ Why wilt thou not make me die ?

⁴ Shaped, appointed.

⁵ Wilt not.

⁶ Burst, break.

⁷ Delight.

⁸ This.

⁹ Hasteneth.

¹⁰ With favour.

¹¹ Therefore no matter.

¹² Die.

¹³ Lend, grant.

¹⁴ Love as true as steel.

¹⁵ Sepulchre.

¹⁶ Destruction.

¹⁷ Pandarus, as it repeatedly appears, was an unsuc-
cessful lover.

¹⁸ Knowest.

¹⁹ In my judgment.

²⁰ Company.

²¹ Therefore.

²² Knows what is virtuous.

I pray God, let this counsel never thé,¹
But do me rather sterve² anon right here,
Ere I thus do, as thou me wouldest lear!"³

Troilus protests that his lady shall have him wholly hers till death; and, debating the counsels of his friend, declares that even if he would, he could not love another. Then he points out the folly of not lamenting the loss of Cressida because she had been his in ease and felicity—while Pandarus himself, though he thought it so light to change to and fro in love, had not done busily his might to change her that wrought him all the woe of his unprosperous suit.

"If thou hast had in love ay yet mischance,
And canst it not out of thine heartē drive,
I that lived in lust⁴ and in pleasance
With her, as much as creature alive,
How should I that forget, and that so blive?⁵
O where hast thou been so long hid in mew,⁶
That canst so well and formally argue!"

The lover condemns the whole discourse of his friend as unworthy, and calls on Death, the ender of all sorrows, to come to him and quench his heart with his cold stroke. Then he distils anew in tears, "as liquor out of alembic;" and Pandarus is silent for a while, till he bethinks him to recommend to Troilus the carrying off of Cressida. "Art thou in Troy, and hast no hardiment⁷ to take a woman which that loveth thee?" But Troilus reminds his counsellor that all the war had come from the ravishing of a woman by might (the abduction of Helen by Paris); and that it would not beseem him to withstand his father's grant, since the lady was to be changed for the town's good. He has dismissed the thought of asking Cressida from his father, because that would be to injure her fair fame, to no purpose, for Priam could not overthrow the decision of "so high a place as parliament;" while most of all he fears to perturb her heart with violence, to the slander of her name—for he must hold her honour dearer than himself in every case, as lovers ought of right:

"Thus am I in desire and reason twight:⁸
Desire, for to disturbē her, me redeth;⁹
And Reason will not, so my heartē dreadeth."¹⁰

Thus weeping, that he couldē never cease,
He said, "Alas! how shall I, wretchē, fare?
For well feel I alway my love increase,
And hope is less and less alway, Pandare!
Increasen eke the causes of my care;
So well-away! why n'ill my heartē brest?¹¹
For us in love there is but little rest."

Pandare answered, "Friend, thou may'st for me

¹ Thrive. ² Die. ³ Teach.
⁴ Delight. ⁵ Quickly.
⁶ Den, place remote from the world—of which thou thus betrayest ignorance. ⁷ Daring, boldness.
⁸ Twisted, pulled contrary ways.
⁹ Counseleth. ¹⁰ Is in doubt.
¹¹ Why will not my heart break?
¹² As thou pleasest.
¹³ If I loved so hotly, and were of the same rank as thou.
¹⁴ Value. ¹⁵ Whisper.

Do as thee list;¹² but had I it so hot,
And thine estate,¹³ she shouldē go with me!
Though all this town cried on this thing by note,
I would not set at¹⁴ all that noise a groat;
For when men have well cried, then will they rown,¹⁵

Eke wonder lasts but nine nights ne'er in town.

"Divinē not in reason ay so deep,
Nor courteously, but help thyself anon;
Bet is that others than thyselfē weep;
And namēly, since ye two be all one,
Rise up, for, by my head, she shall not go'n!
And rather be in blame a little found,
Than sterve here as a gnat,¹⁶ withoutē wound f

"It is no shame unto you, nor no vice,
Her to withholdē, that ye loveth most;
Parauntre¹⁷ she might holdē thee for nice,¹⁸
To let her go thus unto the Greeks' host;
Think eke, Fortune, as well thyselfē wost,
Helpeth the hardy man to his emprise,
And weiveth¹⁹ wretches for their cowardice.

"And though thy lady would a lite her grieve,
Thou shalt thyself thy peace thereafter make;
But, as to me, certain I cannot lieve
That she would it as now for evil take:
Why shouldē then for fear thine heartē quake?
Think eke how Paris hath, that is thy brother,
A love; and why shalt thou not have another?"

"And, Troilus, one thing I dare thee swear,
That if Cressida, which that is thy lief,²⁰
Now loveth thee as well as thou dost her,
God help me so, she will not take agrief²¹
Though thou anon do boot²² in this mischief;
And if she willeth from thee for to pass,
Then is she false, so love her well the lass.²³

"Forthy,²⁴ take heart, and think, right as a knight,
Through love is broken all day ev'ry law;
Kithe²⁵ now somewhat thy courage and thy might;
Have mercy on thyself, for any awe;²⁶
Let not this wretched woe thine heartē gnaw;
But, manly, set the world on six and seven,²⁷
And, if thou die a martyr, go to heaven."

Pandarus promises his friend all aid in the enterprise; it is agreed that Cressida shall be carried off, but only with her own consent; and Pandarus sets out for his niece's house, to arrange an interview. Meantime Cressida has heard the news; and, caring nothing for her father, but everything for Troilus, she burns in love and fear, unable to tell what she shall do.

But, as men see in town, and all about,
That women usē²⁸ friendēs to visite,
So to Cressida of women came a rout,²⁹

¹⁶ Perish like a gnat or fly, by simply pining away.
¹⁷ Peradventure. ¹⁸ Foolish.
¹⁹ Forsaketh. ²⁰ Love.
²¹ Amiss. ²² Provide a remedy immediately.
²³ Less. ²⁴ Therefore. ²⁵ Show.
²⁶ In spite of any fear (of consequences).
²⁷ The modern phrase "sixes and sevens," means "in confusion;" but here the idea of gaming perhaps suits the sense better—"set the world upon a cast of the dice."
²⁸ Are accustomed. ²⁹ Troop.

For piteous joy, and weened her delight,¹
And with their talës, dear enough a mite,²
These women, which that in the city dwell,
They set them down, and said as I shall tell.

Quoth first that one, "I am glad, truly,
Because of you, that shall your father see ;"
Another said, "Y-wis, so am not I,
For all too little hath she with us be."³
Quoth then the third, "I hope, y-wis, that she
Shall bringen us the peace on ev'ry side ;
Then, when she goes, Almighty God her guide!"

Those wordës, and those womanishë thingës,
She heard them right as though she thennës⁴
were,

For, God it wot, her heart on other thing is ;
Although the body sat among them there,
Her advertence⁵ is always ellëswhere ;
For Troilus full fast her soulë sought ;
Withoutë word, on him alway she thought.

These women that thus weened her to please,
Aboutë naught gan all their talës spend ;
Such vanity ne can do her no ease,
As she that all this meanë whilë brenn'd⁶
Of other passion than that they wend ;⁷
So that she felt almost her heartë die
For woe, and weary⁸ of that company.

For whichë she no longer might restrain
Her tearës, they began so up to well,
That gavë signës of her bitter pain,
In which her spirit was, and mustë dwell,
Rememb'ring her from heav'n into which hell
She fallen was, since she forwent⁹ the sight
Of Troilus ; and sorrowfully she sight.¹⁰

And thilkë foolës, sitting her about,
Weened that she had wept and siked¹⁰ sore,
Becausë that she should out of that rout¹¹
Depart, and never playë with them more ;
And they that haddë knowen her of yore
Saw her so weep, and thought it kindëness,
And each of them wept eke for her distress.

And busily they gonne¹² her comfort
Of thing, God wot, on which she little thought ;
And with their talës weened her disport,
And to be glad they often her besought ;
But such an ease therewith they in her wrought,
Right as a man is eased for to feel,
For ache of head, to claw him on his heel.

But, after all this nicë¹³ vanity,
They took their leave, and home they wenten all ;
Cressida, full of sorrowful pity,
Into her chamber up went out of the hall,
And on her bed she gan for dead to fall,
In purpose never thennës for to rise ;
And thus she wrought, as I shall you devise.

¹ Thought to please her.

² Not worth a mite—the smallest coin.

³ Been. ⁴ Thence ; in some other place.

⁵ Attention, mind. ⁶ Burned.

⁷ For "weened ;" supposed.

⁸ Weariness.

⁹ Lost.

¹⁰ Sighed.

¹¹ Company.

¹² Began.

¹³ Silly, foolish.

¹⁴ Lost, ruined.

¹⁵ Providence.

¹⁶ That I should lose.

¹⁷ Without doubt.

¹⁸ Scholars, divines. The controversy between those who maintained the doctrine of predestination and those who held that of free-will raged with no less animation

She rent her sunny hair, wrung her hands,
wept, and bewailed her fate ; vowing that, since,
"for the cruelty," she could handle neither
sword nor dart, she would abstain from meat
and drink until she died. As she lamented,
Pandarus entered, making her complain a thou-
sand times more at the thought of all the joy
which he had given her with her lover ; but
he somewhat soothed her by the prospect of
Troilus's visit, and by the counsel to contain
her grief when he should come. Then Pandarus
went in search of Troilus, whom he found soli-
tary in a temple, as one that had ceased to care
for life :

For right thus was his argument alway :
He said he was but lornë,¹⁴ well-away !
"For all that comes, comes by necessity ;
Thus, to be lorn,¹⁴ it is my destiny.

"For certainly this wot I well," he said,
"That foresight of the divine purveyance¹⁵
Hath seen alway me to forgo¹⁶ Cresseide,
Since God sees ev'ry thing, out of doubtance,¹⁷
And them disposeth, through his ordinance,
In their meritës soothly for to be,
As they should comë by predestiny.

"But natheless, alas ! whom shall I 'lieve ?
For there be greatë clerkës¹⁸ many one
That destiny through argumentës prove,¹⁹
And somë say that needly²⁰ there is none,
But that free choice is giv'n us ev'ry one ;
O well-away ! so aly are clerkës old,
That I n'ot²¹ whose opinion I may hold.

"For some men say, if God sees all beforë,
Goddë may not deceived be, pardie !
Then must it fallen,²² though men had it sworn,
That purveyance hath seen before to be ;
Wherefore I say, that from etern²³ if he
Hath wist before our thought eke as our deed,
We have no free choice, as these clerkës read.²⁴

"For other thought, nor other deed alsë,
Might never be, but such as purveyance,
Which may not be deceived never mo',
Hath feelëd²⁵ before, without ignorance ;
For if there mightë be a variance,
To writen out from Goddë's purveying,
There were no prescience of thing coming.

"But it were rather an opiniön
Uncertain, and no steadfast foreseeing ;
And, certes, that were an abusiön,²⁶
That God should have no perfect clear weeting,²⁷
More than we men, that have doubtful ween-
ing ;²⁸

But such an error upon God to guess,²⁹
Were false, and foul, and wicked cursedness.³⁰

at Chaucer's day, and before it, than it has done in the
subsequent five centuries ; the Dominicans upholding
the sterner creed, the Franciscans taking the other
side. Chaucer has more briefly, and with the same care
not to commit himself, referred to the discussion in *The
Nun's Priest's Tale*, page 169.

¹⁹ Prove.

²⁰ Necessarily.

²¹ Know not.

²² Befall, happen.

²³ Eternity.

²⁴ Maintain.

²⁵ Perceived.

²⁶ An illusion (to believe).

²⁷ Knowledge.

²⁸ Dubious belief or opinion.

²⁹ To impute to God such an error.

³⁰ Implety.

"Eke this is an opini3n of some
That have their top full high and smooth
y-shore,¹

They say right thus, that thing is not to come,
For² that the prescience hath seen before
That it shall come; but they say, that therefore
That it shall come, therefore the purveyance
Wot it before, withouten ignorance.

"And, in this manner, this necessity
Returneth in his part contrary again;³
For needfully behoves it not to be,
That thilk⁴ thinges fallen in certain,⁴
That be purvey'd; but needly, as they sayn,
Behoveth it that thinges, which that fall,
That they in certain be purveyed all.

"I mean as though I labour'd me in this
To inquire which thing cause of which thing be;
As, whether that the prescience of God is
The certain cause of the necessity
Of thinges that to com⁵ be, pardie!
Or if necessity of thing coming
Be caus⁶ certain of the purveying.

"But now enforce I me not⁵ in shewing
How th' order of causes stands; but well wot I,
That it behoveth, that the befalling
Of thinges wist⁶ before certainly,
Be necessary, all seem it not⁷ thereby,
That prescience put falling necessair
To thing to come, all fall it foul or fair.

"For, if there sit a man yond on a see,⁸
Then by necessity behoveth it
That certes thine opini3n sooth be,
That weenest, or conjectest,⁹ that he sit;¹⁰
And, furthermore, now againward yet,
Lo! right so is it on the part contrary;
As thus,—now hearken, for I will not tarry;—

"I say that if th' opinion of thee
Be sooth, for that he sits, then say I this,
That he must sitt¹¹ by necessity;
And thus necessity in either is,
For in him need of sitting is, y-wis,
And, in thee, need of sooth; and thus forsooth
There must necessity be in you both.

"But thou may'st say, the man sits not
therefore
That thine opini3n of his sitting sooth is;
But rather, for the man sat there before,
Therefore is thine opinion sooth, y-wis;
And I say, though the cause of sooth of this
Comes of his sitting, yet necessity
Is interchanged both in him and thee.

"Thus in the sam¹² wise, out of doubtance,
I may well maken, as it seemeth me,
My reasoning of Godd¹³'s purveyance,
And of the thinges that to com¹⁴ be;
By which¹⁵ reason men may well y-see
That thilk¹⁶ thinges that in earth¹⁷ fall,¹⁸
That by necessity they comen all.

¹ That are eminent among the clergy, who wear the tonsure. ² Because.

³ Reacts in the opposite direction.

⁴ Certainly happen.

⁵ I do not make an effort, lay stress.

⁶ Known.

⁷ Although it does not appear.

⁸ Seat.

"For although that a thing should come,
y-wis,

Therefore it is purveyed certainly,
Not that it comes for it purveyed is;
Yet, natheless, behoveth needfully
That thing to come be purvey'd truly;
Or ell¹⁹s thinges that purveyed be,
That they betid¹² by necessity.

"And this sufficeth right enough, certain,
For to destroy our free choice ev'ry deal;
But now is this abusio¹³n, to sayn
That falling of the thinges temporel
Is cause of Godd¹⁴'s prescience eternel;
Now truly that is a false senten¹⁵ce,¹⁴
That thing to come should cause his prescience.

"What might I ween, an'¹⁶ I had such a
thought,
But that God purveys thing that is to come,
For that it is to come, and ell¹⁷s nought?
So might I ween that thinges, all and some,
That whilom be befall and overcome,¹⁸
Be cause of thilk¹⁹ sov'reign purveyance,
That foreknows all, withouten ignorance.

"And over all this, yet say I more thereto,—
That right as when I wot there is a thing,
Y-wis, that thing must needfully be so;
Eke right so, when I wot a thing coming,
So must it come; and thus the befalling
Of thinges that be wist before the tide,¹⁷
They may not be eschew'd¹⁸ on any side."

While Troilus was in all this heaviness, disputing with himself in this matter, Pandarus joined him, and told him the result of the interview with Cressida; and at night the lovers met, with what sighs and tears may be imagined. Cressida swooned away, so that Troilus took her for dead; and, having tenderly laid out her limbs, as one preparing a corpse for the bier, he drew his sword to slay himself upon her body. But, as God would, just at that moment she awoke out of her swoon; and by and by the pair began to talk of their prospects. Cressida declared the opinion, supporting it at great length and with many reasons, that there was no cause for half so much woe on either part. Her surrender, decreed by the parliament, could not be resisted; it was quite easy for them soon to meet again; she would so bring things about that she should be back in Troy within a week or two; she would take advantage of the constant coming and going while the truce lasted; and the issue would be, that the Trojans would have both her and Antenor; while, to facilitate her return, she had devised a stratagem by which, working on her father's avarice, she might tempt him to desert from the Greek camp back to the city. "And truly," says the poet, having fully reported her plausible speech,

And truly, as written well I find,

⁹ Conjecturest.

¹⁰ Those.

¹¹ Illusion, self-deception.

¹² Opinion, judgment.

¹³ That have happened and passed in times gone by.

¹⁴ Time.

¹⁵ Avoided.

¹⁶ Sits.

¹⁷ Happen.

¹⁸ If.

That all this thing was said of good intent,¹
 And that her heartē truē was and kind
 Towardēs him, and spake right as she meant,
 And that she starf² for woe nigh when she went,
 And was in purpose ever to be true;
 Thus writē they that of her workēs knew.

This Troilus, with heart and ears y-sprad,³
 Heard all this thing devised to and fro,
 And verily it seemed that he had
 The selfē wit;⁴ but yet to let her go
 His heartē misforgave⁵ him evermo';
 But, finally, he gan his heartē wrest⁶
 To trustē her, and took it for the best.

For which the great fury of his penānce⁷
 Was quench'd with hope, and therewith them
 between
 Began for joy the amorousē dance;
 And as the birdēs, when the sun is sheen,⁸
 Delighten in their song, in leavēs green,
 Right so the wordēs that they spake y-fere⁹
 Delighten them, and make their heartēs cheer.¹⁰

Yet Troilus was not so well at ease, that he
 did not earnestly entreat Cressida to observe
 her promise; for, if she came not into Troy at
 the set day, he should never have heal, honour,
 or joy; and he feared that the stratagem by
 which she would try to lure her father back
 would fail, so that she might be compelled to
 remain among the Greeks. He would rather
 have them steal away together, with sufficient
 treasure to maintain them all their lives; and
 even if they went in their bare shirt, he had
 kin and friends elsewhere, who would welcome
 and honour them.

Cressida, with a sigh, right in this wise
 Answer'd; "Y-wis, my dearē heartē true,
 We may well steal away, as ye devise,
 And findē such unthrifty wayēs new;
 But afterward full sore it will us rue;¹¹
 And help me God so at my mostē need
 As causēless ye suffer all this dread!

"For thilkē¹² day that I for cherishing
 Or dread of father, or of other wight,
 Or for estate, delight, or for wedding,
 Be false to you, my Troilus, my knight,
 Saturnē's daughter Juno, through her might,
 As wood as Athamantē¹³ do me dwell
 Eternally in Styx the pit of hell!

"And this, on ev'ry god celestial
 I swear it you, and eke on each goddēs,
 On ev'ry nymph, and deity infernāl,
 On Satyrs and on Faunēs more or less,
 That halfē goddēs¹⁴ be of wilderness;
 And Atropos my thread of life to-brest,¹⁵
 If I be false! now trow¹⁶ me if you lest.¹⁷

¹ Of sincere purpose.

² All open.

³ Misgave.

⁴ Compel: wrest away from doubt and misgiving.

⁵ Anguish.

⁶ Together.

⁷ We will regret it.

⁸ Give gladness to their hearts.

⁹ That same.

¹⁰ Athamas, son of Æolus; who, seized with madness,
 under the wrath of Juno for his neglect of his wife
 Nephele, slew his son Learchus.

¹¹ Died.

¹² The same opinion.

¹³ Bright.

¹⁴ Demigods.

¹⁵ Believe.

¹⁶ One of the rivers of the Troad, flowing into the
 Xanthus.

¹⁷ Die.

¹⁸ In a position to reward him well with pleasure.

¹⁹ Rank.

²⁰ Tended unto, accorded with.

²¹ Vulgar.

²² Unstable.

²³ The Fates.

"And thou Simois,¹⁸ that as an arrow clear
 Through Troy ay runnest downward to the sea,
 Bear witness of this word that said is here!
 That thilkē day that I untruē be
 To Troilus, mine owen heartē free,
 That thou returnē backward to thy well,
 And I with body and soul sink in hell!"

Even yet Troilus was not wholly content,
 and urged anew his plan of secret flight; but
 Cressida turned upon him with the charge that
 he mistrusted her causelessly, and demanded
 of him that he should be faithful in her ab-
 sence, else she must die at her return. Troilus
 promised faithfulness in far simpler and briefer
 words than Cressida had used.

"Grand mercy, good heart mine, y-wis," quoth
 she;

"And blissful Venus let me never sterve,¹⁹
 Ere I may stand of pleasance in degree
 To quite him well²⁰ that so well can deserve;
 And while that God my wit will me conserve,
 I shall so do; so true I have you found,
 That ay honour to meward shall rebound.

"For trustē well that your estate²¹ royāl,
 Nor vain delight, nor only worthiness
 Of you in war or tourney martiāl,
 Nor pomp, array, nobley, nor eke richēs,
 Ne madē me to rue²² on your distress;
 But moral virtue, grounded upon truth,
 That was the cause I first had on you ruth.

"Eke gentle heart, and manhood that ye had,
 And that ye had,—as me thought,—in despite
 Every thing that sounded unto²³ bad,
 As rudēness, and peoplish²⁴ appetite,
 And that your reason bridled your delight;
 This made, aboven ev'ry creature,
 That I was yours, and shall while I may dure.

"And this may length of yearēs not fordo,²⁵
 Nor remuable²⁶ Fortunē deface;
 But Jupiter, that of his might may do²⁷
 The sorrowful to be glad, so give us grace,
 Ere nightēs ten to meeten in this place,
 So that it may your heart and mine suffice!
 And fare now well, for time is that ye rise."

The lovers took a heart-rending adieu; and
 Troilus, suffering unimaginable anguish, "with-
 outē more, out of the chamber went."

THE FIFTH BOOK.

APPROACHē gan the fatal destiny
 That Jovis hath in dispositiōn,
 And to you angry Parcsē, Sisters three,
 Committeth to do executiōn;
 For which Cressida must out of the town,

¹⁴ Demigods.

¹⁵ Believe.

¹⁶ One of the rivers of the Troad, flowing into the
 Xanthus.

¹⁷ Die.

¹⁸ In a position to reward him well with pleasure.

¹⁹ Rank.

²⁰ Tended unto, accorded with.

²¹ Vulgar.

²² Unstable.

²³ The Fates.

¹⁵ Break utterly.

¹⁶ If it please you.

¹⁷ Die.

¹⁸ In a position to reward him well with pleasure.

¹⁹ Rank.

²⁰ Tended unto, accorded with.

²¹ Vulgar.

²² Unstable.

²³ The Fates.

²⁴ Break utterly.

²⁵ If it please you.

²⁶ Die.

²⁷ In a position to reward him well with pleasure.

And Troilus shall dwell forth in pine,¹
Till Lachesis his thread no longer twine.²

The golden-tressed Phoebus, high aloft,
Thrice³ had allë, with his beamës clear,
The snowës molt,⁴ and Zephyrus as oft
Y-brought again the tender leavës green,
Since that the son of Hecuba the queen⁵
Began to love her⁶ first, for whom his sorrow
Was all, that she depart should on the morrow.

In the morning, Diomede was ready to escort
Cressida to the Greek host; and Troilus, seeing
him mount his horse, could with difficulty re-
sist an impulse to slay him—but restrained him-
self, lest his lady should be also slain in the
tumult. When Cressida was ready to go,

This Troilus, in guise of courtesy,
With hawk on hand, and with a hugë rout⁷
Of knightës, rode, and did her 'company,
Passing allë the valley far without;
And farther would have ridden, out of doubt,
Full fain,⁸ and woe was him to go so soon,
But turn he must, and it was eke to do'n.

And right with that was Antenor y-come
Out of the Greekës' host, and ev'ry wight
Was of it glad, and said he was welcöme;
And Troilus, all n'ere his heartë light,⁹
He pained him,¹⁰ with all his fullë might,
Him to withhold from weeping at the least;
And Antenor he kiss'd, and madë feast.

And therewithal he must his leavë take,
And cast his eye upon her piteously,
And near he rode, his causë¹¹ for to make
To take her by the hand all soberly;
And, Lord! so she gan weepë tenderly!
And he full soft and sily gan her say,
"Now hold your day, and do me not to dey."¹²

With that his courser turned he about,
With facë pale, and unto Diomede
No word he spake, nor none of all his rout;
Of which the son of Tydeus¹³ tookë heed,
As he that couthë¹⁴ morë than the creed¹⁵
In such a craft, and by the rein her hent;¹⁶
And Troilus to Troyë homeward went.

This Diomede, that led her by the bridle,
When that he saw the folk of Troy away,
Thought, "All my labour shall not be on idle,¹⁷
If that I may, for somewhat shall I say;
For, at the worst, it may yet short our way;
I have heard say eke, times twioë twelve,
He is a fool that will forget himselfe."

But nathelless, this thought he well enough,
That "Certainly I am aboutë naught,
If that I speak of love, or make it tough;¹⁸
For, doubtless, if she have in her thought
Him that I guess, he may not be y-brought

¹ Pain.

² No longer twist the thread of his life.

³ Thrice.

⁴ Melted.

⁵ Troilus, who was son of Priam and Hecuba.

⁶ Cressida.

⁷ Retinue, crowd.

⁸ Gladly.

⁹ Although his heart was not light.

¹⁰ Strove.

¹¹ Excuse, occasion.

¹² Make me not die.

So soon away; but I shall find a mean,
That she not wit as yet shall¹⁹ what I mean."

So he began a general conversation, assured
her of not less friendship and honour among
the Greeks than she had enjoyed in Troy, and
requested of her earnestly to treat him as a
brother and accept his service—for, at last he
said, "I am and shall be ay, while that my life
may dure, your own, aboven ev'ry creature.

"Thus said I never e'er now to woman born;
For, God mine heart as wisly²⁰ gladden so!
I loved never woman herebeforn,
As paramours, nor ever shall no mo';
And for the love of God be not my foe,
All²¹ can I not to you, my lady dear,
Complain aright, for I am yet to lear."²²

"And wonder not, mine owen lady bright,
Though that I speak of love to you thus blive;²³
For I have heard ere this of many a wight
That loved thing he ne'er saw in his live;
Eke I am not of power for to strive
Against the god of Love, but him obey
I will alway, and mercy I you pray."

Cressida answered his discourses as though
she scarcely heard them; yet she thanked him
for his trouble and courtesy, and accepted his
offered friendship—promising to trust him, as
well she might. Then she alighted from her
steed, and, with her heart nigh breaking, was
welcomed to the embrace of her father. Mean-
while Troilus, back in Troy, was lamenting with
tears the loss of his love, despairing of his or
her ability to survive the ten days, and spend-
ing the night in wailing, sleepless tossing, and
troublous dreams. In the morning he was
visited by Pandarus, to whom he gave directions
for his funeral; desiring that the powder into
which his heart was burned should be kept in a
golden urn, and given to Cressida. Pandarus
renewed his old counsels and consolations, re-
minded his friend that ten days were a short time
to wait, argued against his faith in evil dreams,
and urged him to take advantage of the truce,
and beguile the time by a visit to King Sarpedon
(a Lycian Prince who had come to aid the
Trojans). Sarpedon entertained them splendidly;
but no feasting, no pomp, no music of instru-
ments, no singing of fair ladies, could make up
for the absence of Cressida to the desolate
Troilus, who was for ever poring upon her old
letters, and recalling her loved form. Thus he
"drove to an end" the fourth day, and would
have then returned to Troy, but for the remon-
strances of Pandarus, who asked if they had
visited Sarpedon only to fetch fire? At last,
at the end of a week, they returned to Troy;

¹³ Diomedes; far oftener called Tydides, after his
father Tydeus, king of Argos.

¹⁴ Knew.

¹⁵ More than the mere elements (of the science of
Love).

¹⁶ Took.

¹⁷ In vain.

¹⁸ Make any violent immediate effort.

¹⁹ Shall not know as yet.

²⁰ Surely.

²¹ Although.

²² Teach.

²³ Soon.

Troilus hoping to find Cressida again in the city, Pandarus entertaining a scepticism which he concealed from his friend. The morning after their return, Troilus was impatient till he had gone to the palace of Cressida; but when he found her doors all closed, "well nigh for sorrow adown he gan to fall."

Therewith, when he was ware, and gan behold
How shut was ev'ry window of the place,
As frost him thought his heartē gan to cold;¹
For which, with changed deadly palē face,
Withoutē word, he forth began to pace;
And, as God would, he gan so fastē ride,
That no wight of his countenance espied.

Then said he thus: "O palace desolate!
O house of houses, whilom bestē hight!
O palace empty and disconsolate!
O thou lantern, of which quenoh'd is the light!
O palace, whilom day, that now art night!
Well oughtest thou to fall, and I to die,
Since she is gone that wont was us to guy!"²

"O palace, whilom crown of houses all,
Illumined with sun of allē bliss!
O ring, from which the ruby is out fall!
O cause of woe, that cause hast been of bliss!
Yet, since I may no bet, fain would I kiss
Thy coldē doorē, durst I for this rout;³
And farewell shrine, of which the saint is out!"

From thencē forth he rideth up and down,
And ev'ry thing came him to rémembrānce,
As he rode by the places of the town,
In which he whilom had all his pleasānce;
"Lo! yonder saw I mine own lady dance;
And in that temple, with her eyen clear,
Me caughtē first my rightē lady dear.

"And yonder have I heard full lustily
My dearē heartē laugh; and yonder play
Saw I her onēs eke full blissfully;
And yonder onēs to me gan she say,
'Now, goodē sweetē! love me well, I pray;
And yond so gladly gan she me behold,
That to the death my heart is to her'hold."⁴

"And at that corner, in the yonder house,
Heard I mine allerlevest⁵ lady dear,
So womanly, with voice melodious,
Singē so well, so goodly and so clear,
That in my soulē yet me thinks I hear
The blissful sound; and in that yonder place
My lady first me took unto her grace."

Then he went to the gates, and gazed along
the way by which he had attended Cressida at
her departure; then he fancied that all the
passers-by pitied him; and thus he drove forth
a day or two more, singing a song, of few words,
which he had made to lighten his heart:

"O star, of which I lost have all the light,
With heartē sore well ought I to bewail,
That ever dark in torment, night by night,

¹ To grow cold.

² Company.

³ Dearest of all.

⁴ Briefly.

⁵ Easy enough to persuade to stay.

⁶ Delay.

⁷ Guide, rule.

⁸ Holden, bound.

⁹ Miss; be left without.

¹⁰ Fetched.

Toward my death, with wind I steer and sail;
For which, the tenthē night, if that I fail⁶
The guiding of thy beamēs bright an hour,
My ship and me Charybdis will devour."

By night he prayed the moon to run fast
about her sphere; by day he reproached the
tardy sun—dreading that Phaethon had come
to life again, and was driving the chariot of
Apollo out of its straight course. Meanwhile
Cressida, among the Greeks, was bewailing the
refusal of her father to let her return, the cer-
tainty that her lover would think her false, and
the hopelessness of any attempt to steal away
by night. Her bright face waxed pale, her limbs
lean, as she stood all day looking toward Troy;
thinking on her love and all her past delights,
regretting that she had not followed the counsel
of Troilus to steal away with him, and finally
vowing that she would at all hazards return to
the city. But she was fated, ere two months,
to be full far from any such intention; for
Diomedes now brought all his skill into play, to
entice Cressida into his net. On the tenth day,
Diomedes, "as fresh as branch in May," came
to the tent of Cressida, feigning business with
Calchas.

Cressida, at shortē wordēs⁷ for to tell,
Welcomed him, and down by her him set,
And he was eath enough to makē dwell;⁸
And after this, withoutē longē let,⁹
The spices and the wine men forth him fet,¹⁰
And forth they speak of this and that y-fere,¹¹
As friendēs do, of which some shall ye hear.

He gan first fallen of the war in speech
Between them and the folk of Troyē town,
And of the siege he gan eke her beseech
To tell him what was her opinioū;
From that demand he so descended down
To askē her, if that her strangē thought
The Greekēs' guise,¹² and workēs that they
wrought.

And why her father tarriēd¹³ so long
To weddē her unto some worthy wight.
Cressida, that was in her painēs strong
For love of Troilus, her owen knight,
So farforth as she cunning¹⁴ had or might,
Answer'd him then; but, as for his intent,¹⁵
It seemed not she wistē¹⁶ what he meant.

But natheless this ilkē¹⁷ Diomedes
Gan in himself assure,¹⁸ and thus he said:
"If I aright have taken on you heed,¹⁹
Me thinketh thus, O lady mine Cressida,
That since I first hand on your bridle laid,
When ye out came of Troyē by the morrow,
Ne might I never see you but in sorrow.

"I cannot say what may the causē be,
But if for love of some Trojān it were;
The which right sorē would a-thinkē me,²⁰
That ye for any wight that dwelleth there

¹¹ Together.

¹² Delayed.

¹³ Purpose.

¹⁴ Same.

¹⁵ If I have observed you aright.

¹⁶ Which it would much pain me to think.

¹⁷ Fashion.

¹⁸ Ability.

¹⁹ Knew.

²⁰ Grow confident.

Should [ever] spill¹ a quarter of a tear,
Or piteously yourself so beguile;²
For dreadless³ it is not worth the while.

"The folk of Troy, as who saith, all and some
In prison be, as ye yourself see;
From thence shall not one alive come
For all the gold betwixt sun and sea;
Trust this well, and understand me;
There shall not one to mercy go alive,
All⁴ were he lord of worlds twice five.

"What will ye more, lovesome lady dear?
Let Troy and Trojan from your heart pace;
Drive out that bitter hope, and make good cheer,
And call again the beauty of your face,
That ye with salt tears so deface;
For Troy is brought into such jeopardy,
That it to save is now no remedy.

"And think well, ye shall in Greeks find
A love more perfect, ere that it be night,
Than any Trojan is, and more kind,
And better you to serve will do his might;
And, if ye vouchsafe, my lady bright,
I will be he, to serve you, myself,—
Yea, lever⁵ than be a lord of Greeks twelve!"

And with that word he gan to wax red,
And in his speech a little while he quoke,⁶
And cast aside a little with his head,
And stint a while; and afterward he woke,
And soberly on her he threw his look,
And said, "I am, albeit to you no joy,
As gentle⁷ man as any wight in Troy.

"But, heart mine! since that I am your
man,⁸

And be⁹ the first of whom I seek grace,
To serve you as heartily as I can,
And ever shall, while I to live have space,
So, ere that I depart out of this place,
Ye will me grant that I may, to-morrow,
At better leisure, tell you my sorrow."

Why should I tell his words that he said?
He spake enough for one day at the feast;¹⁰
It proveth well he spake so, that Cressida
Granted upon the morrow, at his request,
Farther to speak with him, at the least,
So that he would not speak of such matter;
And thus she said to him, as ye may hear:

As she that had her heart on Troilus
So fast set, that none might it arace;¹¹
And strangely¹² she spake, and said thus;
"O Diomed! I love that ilk place
Where I was born; and Jovis, for his grace,
Deliver it soon of all that doth it care!¹³
God, for thy might, so leave it¹⁴ well to fare!"

¹ Shed.

² Undoubtedly.

³ Rather.

⁴ High-born.

⁵ Liegeman, subject (in love).

⁶ That is, "and since you are."

⁷ Wrench away, unroot (French, "arracher"); the opposite of "enrace," to root in, implant.

⁸ As not entertaining his suit willingly.

⁹ Of all that afflicts it, that causes it care or sorrow.

¹⁰ Grant it, give it leave.

¹¹ Deceive.

¹² Although.

¹³ Quaked; trembled.

¹⁴ Most.

She knows that the Greeks would fain wreak
their wrath on Troy, if they might; but that
shall never befall: she knows that there are
Greeks of high condition—though as worthy
men would be found in Troy: and she knows
that Diomed could serve his lady well.

"But, as to speak of love, y-wis," she said,
"I had a lord, to whom I wedded was,¹⁵
He whose mine heart was all, until he died;
And other love, as help me now Pallas,
There in my heart nor is, nor ever was;
And that ye be of noble and high kindred,
I have well heard it tellen, out of dread.¹⁶

"And that doth¹⁷ me to have so great a
wonder

That ye will scorn any woman so;
Eke, God wot, love and I be far asunder;
I am disposed bet, so may I go,¹⁸
Unto my death to plain and make woe;
What I shall after do I cannot say,
But truly as yet me list not play.¹⁹

"Mine heart is now in tribulation;
And ye in arms busy be by day;
Hereafter, when ye wonnen have the town,
Paraunter²⁰ then, so as it happen may,
That when I see that I never ere say,²¹
Then will I work that I never ere wrought;
This word to you enough suffices ought.

"To-morrow eke will I speak with you fain,²²
So that ye touch naught of this matter;
And when you list, ye may come here again,
And ere ye go, thus much I say you here:
As help me Pallas, with her hairs clear,
If that I should of any Greek have ruth,
It should be yourself, by my truth!

"I say not therefore that I will you love;
Nor say not nay;²³ but, in conclusion,
I mean well, by God that sits above!"
And therewithal she cast her eye down,
And gan to sigh, and said; "O Troy town!
Yet bid²⁴ I God, in quiet and in rest
I may you see, or do my heart brest!"²⁵

But in effect, and shortly for to say,
This Diomed all freshly new again
Gan pressen on, and fast her mercy pray;
And after this, the sooth for to sayn,
Her glove he took, of which he was full fain,
And finally, when it was waxen eve,
And all was well, he rose and took his leave.

Cressida retired to rest

Returning in her soul ay up and down
The words of this sudden Diomed,²⁶
His great estate,²⁷ the peril of the town,
And that she was alone, and had need
Of friends' help; and thus began to dread

¹⁵ It will be remembered that, at the beginning of the first book, Cressida is introduced to us as a widow.

¹⁶ Doubt. ¹⁷ Causeth. ¹⁸ So may I fare or prosper.

¹⁹ I am not disposed for sport.

²⁰ Peradventure.

²¹ Saw before.

²² Willingly.

²³ Nor say I that I will not.

²⁴ Pray.

²⁵ Cause my heart to break.

²⁶ Diomed is called "sudden," for the unexpectedness of his assault on Cressida's heart—or, perhaps, for the abrupt abandonment of his indifference to love.

²⁷ Rank.

The causes why, the sooth¹ for to tell,
That she took fully the purpose for to dwell.¹

The morrow came, and, ghostly² for to speak,
This Diomede is come unto Cresseide;
And shortly, lest that ye my tal³ break,
So well he for himself⁴ spake and said,
That all her sighs sore adown he laid;
And finally, the sooth⁵ for to sayn,
He reft⁶ her the great⁷ of all her pain.

And after this, the story telleth us
That she him gave the fair⁸ bay⁹ steed
The which she on¹⁰s won of Troilus;
And eke a brooch (and that was little need)
That Troilus' was, she gave this Diomede;
And eke, the bet from sorrow him to relieve,
She made him wear a pensel⁴ of her sleeve.

I find eke in the story ell¹¹ewhere,
When through the body hurt was Diomede
By Troilus, she wept many a tear,
When that she saw his wide wound¹²s bleed,
And that she took to keep¹³ him good heed,
And, for to heal him of his sorrow's smart,
Men say, I n¹⁴ot,¹⁵ that she gave him her heart.

And yet, when pity had thus completed the triumph of inconstancy, she made bitter moan over her falseness to one of the noblest and worthiest men that ever was; but it was now too late to repent, and at all events she resolved that she would be true to Diomede—all the while weeping for pity of the absent Troilus, to whom she wished every happiness. The tenth day, meantime, had barely dawned, when Troilus, accompanied by Pandarus, took his stand on the walls, to watch for the return of Cressida. Till noon they stood, thinking that every comer from afar was she; then Troilus said that doubtless her old father bore the parting ill, and had detained her till after dinner; so they went to dine, and returned to their vain observation on the walls. Troilus invented all kinds of explanations for his mistress's delay; now, her father would not let her go till eve; now, she would ride quietly into the town after nightfall, not to be observed; now, he must have mistaken the day. For five or six days he watched, still in vain, and with decreasing hope. Gradually his strength decayed, until he could walk only with a staff; answering the wondering inquiries of his friends, by saying that he had a grievous malady about his heart. One day he dreamed that in a forest he saw Cressida in the embrace of a boar; and he had no longer doubt of her falsehood. Pandarus, however, explained away the dream to mean merely that Cressida was detained by her father, who might be at the point of death; and he counselled the disconsolate lover to write a letter, by which he might perhaps get at the

truth. Troilus complied, entreating from his mistress, at the least, a "letter of hope;" and the lady answered, that she could not come now, but would so soon as she might; at the same time "making him great feast," and swearing that she loved him best—"of which he found but bottomless behest."⁷ Day by day increased the woe of Troilus; he laid himself in bed, neither eating, nor drinking, nor sleeping, nor speaking, almost distracted by the thought of Cressida's unkindness. He related his dream to his sister Cassandra, who told him that the boar betokened Diomede, and that, wheresoever his lady was, Diomede certainly had her heart, and she was his: "weep if thou wilt, or leave, for, out of doubt, this Diomede is in, and thou art out." Troilus, enraged, refused to believe Cassandra's interpretation; as well, he cried, might such a story be credited of Alceste, who devoted her life for her husband; and in his wrath he started from bed, "as though all whole had him y-made a leach,"⁸ resolving to find out the truth at all hazards. The death of Hector meanwhile enhanced the sorrow which he endured; but he found time to write often to Cressida, beseeching her to come again and hold her truth; till one day his false mistress, out of pity, wrote him again, in these terms:

"Cupid's son, ensample of goodlihead,⁹
O sword of knighthood, source of gentleness!
How might a wight in torment and in dread,
And heal¹⁰less, you send as yet gladness?
I heart¹¹less, I sick, I in distress?
Since ye with me, nor I with you, may deal,
You neither send I may nor heart nor heal.

"Your letters full, the paper all y-plainted,¹²
Commo¹³ved have min¹⁴e heart's pity;
I have eke seen with tear¹⁵s all depainted
Your letter, and how ye requir¹⁶e me
To come again; the which yet may not be;
But why, lest that this letter founden were,
No menti¹⁷on I mak¹⁸e now for fear.

"Grievous to me, God wot, is your unrest,
Your haste,¹⁹ and that the godd²⁰es' ordinance
It seemeth not ye take as for the best;
Nor other thing is in your remembrance,
As thinketh me, but only your pleasance;
But be not wroth, and that I you beseech,
For that I tarry is all for wicked speech."²¹

"For I have heard well more than I wend²²
Touching us two, how thing²³s have stood,
Which I shall with dissimuling amend;
And, be not wroth, I have eke understood
How ye ne do but hold²⁴e me on hand;²⁵
But now no force,²⁶ I cannot in you guess
But all²⁷e truth and all²⁸e gentleness.

¹ To remain among the Greeks.

² Plainly.

³ Took away from her great part: relieved her.

⁴ A pennon or pendant; French, "penoncel." It was the custom in chivalric times for a knight to wear, on days of tournament or in battle, some such token of his lady's favour, or badge of his service to her.

⁵ Tend, care for.

⁶ I know not (whether truly or not).

⁷ Which he found but groundless promises.

⁸ Physician.

⁹ Beauty, excellence.

¹⁰ Devoid of health.

¹¹ Covered with complainings.

¹² Impatience.

¹³ She excuses herself by saying that she stays to avoid or silence malicious gossip about their love.

¹⁴ Weened, thought.

¹⁵ She has been told that Troilus is deceiving her.

¹⁶ No matter (for such tales).

"Comen I will, but yet in such disjoint¹
I stande now, that what year or what day
That this shall be, that can I not appoint;
But in effect I pray you, as I may,
For your good word and for your friendship ay;
For truly, while that my life may dure,
As for a friend, ye may in me assure.²

"Yet³ pray I you, on evil ye not take⁴
That it is short, which that I to you write;
I dare not, where I am, well letters make;
Nor never yet ne could I well endite;
Eke great effect men write in placē lite;⁵
Th' intent⁶ is all, and not the letter's space;
And fare now well, God have you in his grace!
"La Vostre C."

Though he found this letter "all strange,"
and thought it like "a kalendēs of change,"⁷
Troilus could not believe his lady so cruel as
to forsake him; but he was put out of all doubt,
one day that, as he stood in suspicion and melan-
choly, he saw a "coat-armour" borne along the
street, in token of victory, before Deiphobus his
brother. Deiphobus had won it from Diomedes
in battle that day; and Troilus, examining it
out of curiosity, found within the collar a brooch
which he had given to Cressida on the morning
she left Troy, and which she had pledged her
faith to keep for ever in remembrance of his
sorrow and of him. At this fatal discovery of
his lady's untruth,

Great was the sorrow and plaint of Troilus;
But forth her course Fortune ay gan to hold;
Cressida lov'd the son of Tydeus,
And Troilus must weep in carēs cold.
Such is the world, whoso it can behold!
In each estate is little heartē's rest;
God lend⁸ us each to take it for the best!

In many a cruel battle Troilus wrought havoc
among the Greeks, and often he exchanged blows
and bitter words with Diomedes, whom he always
specially sought; but it was not their lot that
either should fall by the other's hand. The
poet's purpose, however, he tells us, is to relate,
not the warlike deeds of Troilus, which Dares
has fully told, but his love-fortunes:

Beseeching ev'ry lady bright of hue,
And ev'ry gentle woman, what she be,⁹
Albeit that Cressida was untrue,
That for that guilt ye be not wroth with me;
Ye may her guilt in other bookēs see;
And gladder I would writen, if you lest,
Of Penelopē's truth, and good Alceste.

Nor say I not this only all for men,

¹ Jeopardy, critical position.

² Depend on me.

³ Moreover.

⁴ Do not take it ill.

⁵ Men write great matter in little space.

⁶ Meaning.

⁷ The Roman kalends were the first day of the month, when a change of weather was usually expected.

⁸ Grant.

⁹ Whatsoever she be.

¹⁰ Be envious of no poetry (of others). Maker, and making, words used in the Middle Ages to signify the composer and the composition of poetry, correspond exactly with the Greek ποιητής and ποιημα, from ποιεω, I make.

¹¹ Beseech.

But most for women that betrayed be
Through falsē folk (God give them sorrow,
Amen!)

That with their greatē wit and subtilty
Betrayē you; and this commoveth me
To speak; and in effect you all I pray,
Beware of men, and hearken what I say.

Go, little book, go, little tragedy!
There God my maker, yet ere that I die,
So send me might to make some comedy!
But, little book, no making thou envy,¹⁰
But subject be unto all poesý;
And kiss the steps, where as thou seest space,
Of Virgil, Ovid, Homer, Lucan, Stace.

And, for there is so great diversity
In English, and in writing of our tongue,
So pray I God, that none miswritē thee,
Nor thee miámetre, for default of tongue!
And read whereso thou be, or ellēs sung,
That thou be understanden, God I 'seech!¹¹
But yet to purpose of my rather speech.¹²

The wrath, as I began you for to say,
Of Troilus the Greekēs boughtē dear;
For thousandēs his handēs madē dey,¹³
As he that was withouten any peer,
Save in his time Hector, as I can hear;
But, well-away! save only Goddē's will,
Dispiteously him slew the fierce Achill'.

And when that he was slain in this mannēre,
His lightē ghost¹⁴ full blissfully is went¹⁵
Up to the hollowness of the seventh sphere,
In converse¹⁶ leaving ev'ry element;
And there he saw, with full advisēment,¹⁷
Th' erratic starrēs heark'ning harmony,
With soundēs full of heav'nly melody.

And down from thennēs fast he gan advise¹⁸
This little spot of earth, that with the sea
Embraced is; and fully gan despise
This wretched world, and held all vanity,
To rēspect of the plain felicity¹⁹
That is in heav'n above; and, at the last,
Where he was slain his looking down he cast.

And in himself he laugh'd right at the woe
Of them that weptē for his death so fast;
And damned²⁰ all our works, that follow so
The blindē lust, the which that may not last,
And shoulde²¹ all our heart on heaven cast;
And forth he wentē, shortly for to tell,
Where as Mercury sorted²² him to dwell.

Such fine²³ hath, lo! this Troilus for love!
Such fine hath all his greatē worthiness!
Such fine hath his estate royal above!²⁴

¹² My earlier, former subject; "rather" is the comparative of the old adjective "rath," early.

¹³ Made to die.

¹⁴ Spirit.

¹⁵ Gone.

¹⁶ Passing up through the hollowness or concavity of the spheres, which all revolve round each other and are all contained by God (see note 11, page 217), the soul of Troilus, looking downward, beholds the converse or convex side of the spheres which it has traversed.

¹⁷ Clear observation or understanding.

¹⁸ Consider, look upon.

¹⁹ In comparison with the full felicity.

²⁰ Condemned.

²¹ While we should.

²² Allotted; from Latin, "sors," lot, fortune.

²³ End.

²⁴ His exalted royal rank.

Such fine his lust,¹ such fine hath his nobles !
 Such fine hath falsē worldē's brittleness !²
 And thus began his loving of Cresside,
 As I have told ; and in this wise he died.

O young and freshē folkē, he or she,³
 In which that love upgroweth with your age,
 Repairē home from worldly vanity,
 And of your heart upcastē the viage⁴
 To thilkē⁵ God, that after his imāge
 You made, and think that all is but a fair,
 This world that passeth soon, as flowers fair !

And lovē Him, the which that, right for love,
 Upon a cross, our soulēs for to bey,⁶
 First starf,⁷ and rose, and sits in heav'n above ;
 For he will falsē⁸ no wight, dare I say,
 That will his heart all wholly on him lay ;
 And since he best to love is, and most meek,
 What needeth feigned lovēs for to seek ?

Lo ! here of paynims⁹ cursed oldē rites !
 Lo ! here what all their goddēs may avail !
 Lo ! here this wretched worldē's appetites !
 Lo ! here the fine and guerdon for travail,¹⁰

Of Jove, Apollo, Mars, and such rascaille !¹¹
 Lo ! here the form of oldē clerkēs' speech,
 In poetry, if ye their bookēs seech !¹²

L'Envoy of Chaucer.

O moral Gower !¹³ this book I direct
 To thee, and to the philosophical Strode,¹⁴
 To vouchēsafe, where need is, to correct,
 Of your benignities and zealēs good.
 And to that soothfast Christ that starf on rood,¹⁵
 With all my heart, of mercy ever I pray,
 And to the Lord right thus I speak and say :

"Thou One, and Two, and Three, etern on
 live,¹⁶

That reignest ay in Three, and Two, and One,
 Uncircumscrib'd, and all may'st circumscrive,¹⁷
 From visible and invisibler fone¹⁸
 Defend us in thy mercy ev'ry one ;
 So make us, Jesus, for thy mercy dign,¹⁹
 For love of Maid and Mother thine benign !"

Explicit Liber Troili et Cressidie.

CHAUCER'S DREAM.

[THIS pretty allegory, or rather conceit, containing one or two passages that for vividness and for delicacy yield to nothing in the whole range of Chaucer's poetry, had never been printed before the year 1597, when it was included in the edition of Speght. Before that date, indeed, a Dream of Chaucer had been printed ; but the poem so described was in reality "The Book of the Duchess ; or the Death of Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster"—which is not included in the present edition. Speght says that "This Dream, devised by Chaucer, seemeth to be a covert report of the marriage of John of Gaunt, the King's son, with Blanche, the daughter of Henry, Duke of Lancaster ; who after long love (during the time whereof the poet feigneth them to be dead) were in the end, by consent of friends, happily married ; figured by a bird bringing in his bill an herb, which restored them to life again. Here also is showed Chaucer's match with a certain gentlewoman, who, although she was a stranger, was, notwithstanding, so well liked and loved of the Lady Blanche and her Lord, as Chaucer himself also was, that gladly they concluded a marriage between them." John of Gaunt, at the age of nineteen, and while yet Earl of Richmond, was married to the Lady Blanche at Reading in May 1359 ; Chaucer, then a prisoner in France, probably did not return to England till peace was concluded in the following year ; so that his marriage to Philippa Roet, the sister of the Duchess Blanche's favourite attendant Katharine Roet, could not have taken place till some time after that of the Duke. In the poem, it is represented to have immediately followed ; but no consequence need be attached to that statement. Enough that it followed at no great interval of time ; and that the intimate relations which Chaucer had already begun to form with John of Gaunt, might well warrant him in writing this poem on the occasion of the Duke's marriage, and in weaving his own love-fortunes with those of the principal figures. In the necessary abridgement of the poem for the present edition, the

¹ Pleasure.

² Of either sex.

⁴ "Lift up the countenance of your heart."

⁵ That.

⁷ Died.

⁹ Pagans.

¹¹ "And all that rabble ;" French, "rascaille"—a mob or multitude, the riff-raff ; so Spenser speaks of the "rascal routs" of inferior combatants.

³ Fickleness, instability.

⁶ Buy, redeem.

⁸ Deceive, fail.

¹⁰ The end and reward for labour.

¹² Seek, search.

¹³ John Gower, the poet, a contemporary and friend of Chaucer's ; author, among other works, of the "Confessio Amantis." See note 2, page 61.

¹⁴ Strode was an eminent scholar of Merton College, Oxford, and tutor to Chaucer's son Lewis.

¹⁵ Died on cross.

¹⁷ Yet able to circumscribe or comprehend all.

¹⁸ Foes.

¹⁶ Eternally living.

¹⁹ Worthy of thy mercy.

subsidiary branch of the allegory, relating to the poet's own love affair, has been so far as possible separated from the main branch, which shadows forth the fortunes of John and Blanche. The poem, in full, contains, with an "Envoy" arbitrarily appended, 2233 lines; of which 510 are given here.]

WHEN Flora, the queen of pleasance,
Had wholly achiev'd the obéissance¹
Of the fresh and the new season,
Thorough ev'ry región;
And with her mantle whole covért
What winter had made discovért,²—

On a May night, the poet lay alone, thinking
of his lady, and all her beauty; and, falling
asleep, he dreamed that he was in an island

Where wall, and gate, was all of glass,
And so was closed round about,
That leaveless³ none came in nor out;
Uncouth and strangè to behold;
For ev'ry gate, of finè gold,
A thousand fanès,⁴ ay turning,
Entuned⁵ had, and birds singing
Diversely, on each fane a pair,
With open mouth, against the air;⁶
And of a suit⁷ were all the tow'rs,
Subtilly carven after⁸ flow'rs
Of uncouth colours, during ay,
That never be none seen in May,
With many a small turret high;
But man alive I could not sigh,⁹
Nor créatures, save ladies play,¹⁰
Which werè such of their array,
That, as me thought, of goodlihead¹¹
They passed all, and womanhead.
For to behold them dance and sing,
It seemed like none earthly thing;

And all were of the same age, save one; who
was advanced in years, though no less gay in
demeanour than the rest. While he stood ad-
miring the richness and beauty of the place,
and the fairness of the ladies, which had the
notable gift of enduring unimpaired till death,
the poet was accosted by the old lady, to whom
he had to yield himself prisoner; because the
ordinance of the isle was, that no man should
dwell there; and the ladies' fear of breaking
the law was enhanced by the temporary absence
of their queen from the realm. Just at this
moment the cry was raised that the queen came;
all the ladies hastened to meet her; and soon
the poet saw her approach—but in her com-
pany his mistress, wearing the same garb, and
a seemly knight. All the ladies wondered
greatly at this; and the queen explained:

"My sisters, how it hath befall,¹²
I trow ye know it one and all,

That of long time here have I been
Within this isle biding as queen,
Living at ease, that never wight
More perfect joyè have not might;
And to you been of governance
Such as you found in whole pleasance,¹³
In every thing as ye know,
After our custom and our law;
Which how they firstè founded were,
I trow ye wot all the mannère.
And who the queen is of this isle,—
As I have been this longè while,—
Each seven years must, of usàge,
Visit the heav'nly hermitage,
Which on a rock so highè stands,
In a strange sea, out from all lands,
That for to make the pilgrimage
Is call'd a perilous voyàge;
For if the wind be not good friend,
The journey dureth to the end
Of him which that it undertakes;
Of twenty thousand not one scapes.
Upon which rock groweth a tree,
That certain years bears apples three;
Which three apples whoso may have,
Is from all displeasance¹⁴ y-save¹⁵
That in the seven years may fall;
This wot you well, both one and all.
For the first apple and the hert,¹⁶
Which groweth unto you the next,
Hath three virtues notable,
And keepeth youth ay durable,
Beauty, and looks, ever-in-one,¹⁷
And is the best of ev'ry one.
The second apple, red and green,
Only with lookès of your eyne,
You nourishes in great pleasance,
Better than partridge or fesaunce,¹⁸
And feedeth ev'ry living wight
Pleasantly, only with the sight.
And the third apple of the three,
Which groweth lowest on the tree,
Whoso it beareth may not fail¹⁹
That²⁰ to his pleasance may avail.
So your pleasure and beauty rich,
Your during youth ever y-lich,²¹
Your truth, your cunning,²² and your weal,
Hath flower'd ay, and your good heal,
Without sickness or displeasance,
Or thing that to you was noyànce.²³
So that you have as goddesses

¹ Won the obedience, made subject to her.

² Wholly covered that which winter had stripped—that is, the earth.

³ Without permission.

⁴ Vanes, weathercocks.

⁵ Contrived so as to emit a musical sound; attuned.

⁶ Meeting the wind, so that it entered their open mouths, and by some mechanism produced the musical sound.

⁷ Of the same plan.

⁸ Carved to represent.

⁹ See.

¹⁰ Sporting themselves.

¹¹ For comeliness.

¹² Befallen.

¹³ That is, "and have governed you in a manner which you have found wholly pleasant."

¹⁴ Pain, unpleasantness.

¹⁵ Safe.

¹⁶ Highest; from "high," as "next" from "nigh." Compare the sounds of the German, "höchst," highest, and "nächst," next.

¹⁷ Continually.

¹⁸ Pheasant.

¹⁹ Miss, fail to obtain.

²⁰ That which.

²¹ Alike.

²² Knowledge.

²³ Offence, injury.

Lived above all princesses.
 Now is befall'n, as ye may see ;
 To gather these said apples three,
 I have not fail'd, against the day,
 Thitherward to take the way,
 Weening to speed¹ as I had oft.
 But when I came, I found aloft
 My sister, which that herë stands,
 Having those apples in her hands,
 Advising² them, and nothing said,
 But look'd as she were well apaid :³
 And as I stood her to behold,
 Thinking how my joys were cold,
 Since I these apples have not might,⁴
 Even with that so came this knight,
 And in his arms, of me unware,
 Me took, and to his ship me bare,
 And said, though him I ne'er had seen,
 Yet had I long his lady been ;
 Wherefore I shouldë with him wend,
 And he would, to his lifë's end,
 My servant be ; and gan to sing,
 As one that had won a rich thing.
 Then were my spirits from me gone,
 So suddenly every one,
 That in me appear'd but death,
 For I felt neither life nor breath,
 Nor good nor harmë none I knew,⁵
 The sudden pain me was so new,
 That had not the hasty grace be⁶
 Of this lady, that from the tree
 Of her gentleness so hied,⁶
 Me to comforten, I had died ;
 And of her three apples she one
 Into mine hand there put anon,
 Which brought again my mind and breath,
 And me recover'd from the death.
 Wherefore to her so am I hold,⁷
 That for her all things do I wo'ld,
 For she was leach⁸ of all my smart,
 And from great pain so quit⁹ my heart.
 And as God wot, right as ye hear,
 Me to comfort with friendly cheer,
 She did her prowess and her might.
 And truly eke so did this knight,
 In that he could ; and often said,
 That of my woe he was ill paid,¹⁰
 And curs'd the ship that him there brought,
 The mast, the master that it wrought.
 And, as each thing must have an end,
 My sister here, our bother friend,¹¹
 Gan with her words so womanly
 This knight entreat, and cunningly,
 For mine honour and hers alsó,
 And said that with her we should go
 Both in her ship, where she was brought,
 Which was so wonderfully wrought,
 So clean, so rich, and so array'd,

¹ Expecting to succeed. ² Regarding, gazing on.

³ Well satisfied. ⁴ Might not have.

⁵ Had it not been for the prompt kindness.

⁶ Hastened. ⁷ Holden, obliged.

⁸ Physician. ⁹ Delivered.

¹⁰ Distressed, ill-pleased with himself.

¹¹ "Your brother friend," is the common reading ; but the phrase has no apparent applicability ; and perhaps the better reading is "our bother friend"—that is, the lady who has proved herself a friend both to me

That we were both content and paid ;¹²
 And me to comfort and to please,
 And my heart for to put at ease,
 She took great pain in little while,
 And thus hath brought us to this isle,
 As ye may see ; wherefore each one
 I pray you thank her one and one,
 As heartily as ye can devise,
 Or imagine in any wise."

At once there then men mightë see'n,
 A world of ladies fall on kneen
 Before my lady,—

Thanking her, and placing themselves at her commandment. Then the queen sent the aged lady to the knight, to learn of him why he had done her all this woe ; and when the messenger had discharged her mission, telling the knight that in the general opinion he had done amiss, he fell down suddenly as if dead for sorrow and repentance. Only with great difficulty, by the queen herself, was he restored to consciousness and comfort ; but though she spoke kind and hope-inspiring words, her heart was not in her speech,

For her intent was, to his barge
 Him for to bring against the eve,
 With certain ladies, and take leave,
 And pray him, of his gentleness,
 To suffer her¹³ thenceforth in peace,
 As other princes had before ;
 And from thenceforth, for evermore,
 She would him worship in all wise
 That gentlenessë might devise ;
 And pain her¹⁴ wholly to fulfil,
 In honour, his pleasure and will.

And during thus this knightë's woe,—
 Present¹⁵ the queen and other mo',
 My lady and many another wight,—
 Ten thousand shippës at a sight
 I saw come o'er the wavy flood,
 With sail and oar ; that, as I stood
 Them to behold, I gan marvail
 From whom might come so many a sail ;
 For, since the time that I was born,
 Such a navy therebeforn
 Had I not seen, nor so array'd,
 That for the sight my heartë play'd
 Ay to and fro within my breast ;
 For joy long was ere it would rest.
 For there were sailës full of flow'rs ;¹⁶
 After, castles with huge tow'rs,¹⁷
 Seeming full of armës bright,
 That wond'rous lusty¹⁸ was the sight ;
 With largë tops, and mastës long,
 Richly depaint' and rear'd among.¹⁹
 At certain timës gan repair
 Smallë birdës down from the air,

and to you. In the same way, Reason, in Troilus' soliloquy on the impending loss of his mistress, is made, addressing Troilus and Cressida, to speak of "your bother," or "bothë," love. ¹² Satisfied.

¹³ That is, to let her dwell. ¹⁴ Make her utmost efforts.

¹⁵ (There being) present.

¹⁶ Embroidered with flowers.

¹⁷ High embattled poops and forecastles, as in medieval ships of war.

¹⁸ Pleasant.

¹⁹ Raised among them.

And on the shippes' bounds¹ about
Sat and sang, with voice full out,
Ballads and lays right joyously,
As they could in their harmony.

The ladies were alarmed and sorrow-stricken at sight of the ships, thinking that the knight's companions were on board; and they went towards the walls of the isle, to shut the gates. But it was Cupid who came; and he had already landed, and marched straight to the place where the knight lay. Then he chid the queen for her unkindness to his servant; shot an arrow into her heart; and passed through the crowd, until he found the poet's lady, whom he saluted and complimented, urging her to have pity on him that loved her. While the poet, standing apart, was revolving all this in his mind, and resolving truly to serve his lady, he saw the queen advance to Cupid, with a petition in which she besought forgiveness of past offences, and promised continual and zealous service till her death. Cupid smiled, and said that he would be king within that island, his new conquest; then, after long conference with the queen, he called a council for the morrow, of all who chose to wear his colours. In the morning, such was the press of ladies, that scarcely could standing-room be found in all the plain. Cupid presided; and one of his counsellors addressed the mighty crowd, promising that ere his departure his lord should bring to an agreement all the parties there present. Then Cupid gave to the knight and the dreamer each his lady; promised his favour to all the others in that place who would truly and busily serve in love; and at evening took his departure. Next morning, having declined the proffered sovereignty of the island, the poet's mistress also embarked, leaving him behind; but he dashed through the waves, was drawn on board her ship from peril of death, and graciously received into his lady's lasting favour. Here the poet awakes, finding his cheeks and body all wet with tears; and, removing into another chamber, to rest more in peace, he falls asleep anew, and continues the dream. Again he is within the island, where the knight and all the ladies are assembled on a green, and it is resolved by the assembly, not only that the knight shall be their king, but that every lady there shall be wedded also. It is determined that the knight shall depart that very day, and return, within ten days, with such a host of Benedicts, that none in the isle need lack husbands. The knight

Anon into a little barge
Brought was, late against an eve,
Where of all he took his leave.
Which barge was, as a man thought,
After² his pleasure to him brought;
The queen herself accustom'd ay

In the same barge to play.³
It needed neither mast nor rother⁴
(I have not heard of such another),
Nor master for the governance;⁵
It sailed by thought and pleasance,
Without labour, east and west;
All was one, calm or tempest.⁶
And I went with, at his request,
And was the first pray'd to the feast.⁷
When he came unto his country,
And passed had the wavy sea,
In a haven deep and large
He left his rich and noble barge,
And to the court, shortly to tell,
He went, where he was wont to dwell,—

And was gladly received as king by the estates of the land; for during his absence his father, "old, and wise, and hoar," had died, commending to their fidelity his absent son. The prince related to the estates his journey, and his success in finding the princess in quest of whom he had gone seven years before; and said that he must have sixty thousand guests at his marriage feast. The lords gladly guaranteed the number within the set time; but afterwards they found that fifteen days must be spent in the necessary preparations. Between shame and sorrow, the prince, thus compelled to break his faith, took to his bed, and, in wailing and self-reproach,

—Endur'd the days fifteen,
Till that the lords, on an evéne,⁸
Him came and told they ready were,
And showed in few wordes there,
How and what wise they had purvey'd
For his estate,⁹ and to him said,
That twenty thousand knights of name,
And forty thousand without blame,
Allé come of noble ligné¹⁰
Together in a company
Were lodged on a river's side,
Him and his pleasure there t' abide.
The prince then for joy uprose,
And, where they lodged were, he goes,
Without more, that same night,
And there his supper made to dight;¹¹
And with them bode¹² till it was day.
And forthwith to take his journey,
Leaving the strait, holding the large,
Till he came to his noble barge:
And when the prince, this lusty knight,
With his people in armés bright,
Was comé where he thought to pass,¹³
And knew well none abiding was
Behind, but all were there présent,
Forthwith anon all his intent
He told them there, and made his cries¹⁴
Thorough his hosté that day twice,
Commanding ev'ry living wight
There being present in his sight,

¹ Bulwarks. ² According to. ³ Take her sport.
⁴ Rudder. ⁵ Steerage.

¹² Compare Spenser's account of Phœdria's barque, in "The Faerie Queene," canto vi. book ii., page 380; and, *mutatis mutandis*, Chaucer's description of the wondrous horse, in The Equire's Tale, pages 116, 118.

⁷ The bridal feast. ⁸ Evening.

⁹ Provided suitably to his rank.

¹⁰ Line, lineage.

¹¹ Prepare.

¹² Abode, waited.

¹³ From his own land to the ladies' isle.

¹⁴ Proclamation.

To be the morrow on the rivage,¹
Where he begin would his voyage.

The morrow come, the cry was kept;²
But few were there that night that slept,
But truss'd and purvey'd³ for the morrow;
For fault of ships was all their sorrow;
For, save the barge, and other two,
Of shippes there I saw no mo'.
Thus in their doubtës as they stood,
Waxing the sea, coming the flood,
Was cried "To ship go ev'ry wight!"
Then was but he that his him might,⁴
And to the barge, me thought, each one
They went, without was left not one,
Horsë, nor male,⁵ truss, nor baggage,
Salad,⁶ spear, gardëbrace,⁷ nor page,
But was lodged and room enough;
At which shipping me thought I lough,⁸
And gan to marvel in my thought,
How ever such a ship was wrought.⁹
For what people that can increase,¹⁰
Nor ne'er so thiek might be the prease,¹¹
But allë haddë room at will;
There was not one was lodged ill.
For, as I trow, myself the last
Was one, and lodged by the mast;
And where I look'd I saw such room
As all were lodged in a town.
Forth went the ship, said was the creed;¹²
And on their knees, for their good speed,¹³
Down kneeled ev'ry wight a while,
And prayed fast that to the isle
They mightë come in safety,
The prince and all the company,
With worahip and withoutë blame,
Or disclander¹⁴ of his name,
Of the promise he should return
Within the time he did sojourn
In his landë biding¹⁵ his host;
This was their prayer least and most:
To keep the day it might not be'n,
That he appointed with the queen.

Wherefore the prince slept neither day nor night, till he and his people landed on the glass-walled isle, "weening to be in heav'n that night." But ere they had gone a little way, they met a lady all in black, with piteous countenance, who reproached the prince for his untruth, and informed him that, unable to bear the reproach to their name, caused by the lightness of their trust in strangers, the queen and all the ladies of the isle had vowed neither to eat, nor drink, nor sleep, nor speak, nor cease weeping till all were dead. The queen had died the first; and half of the other ladies had already "under the earth ta'en lodging new."

¹ Shore.

² The command of the proclamation was obeyed.

³ Packed up and provided.

⁴ Then it was all haste who haste might.

⁵ Trunk, wallet.

⁶ A small helmet; French, "salade."

⁷ French, "garde-bras," an arm-shield; probably resembling the "gay bracer" which the Yeoman, in the Prologue to The Canterbury Tales, wears on his arm; see page 18.

⁸ Laughed.

⁹ Constructed.

¹⁰ No matter how much the people might increase.

The woeful recorder of all these woes invites the prince to behold the queen's hearse:

"Come within, come see her hearse;
Where ye shall see the piteous¹⁶ sight
That ever yet was shown to knight;
For ye shall see ladies stand,
Each with a greatë rod in hand,
Clad in black, with visage white,
Ready each other for to smite,
If any be that will not weep;
Or who makes countenance to sleep.
They be so beat, that all so blue
They be as cloth that dy'd is new."

Scarcely has the lady ceased to speak, when the prince plucks forth a dagger, plunges it into his heart, and, drawing but one breath, expires.

For whichë cause the lusty host,
Which [stood] in battle on the coast,
At once for sorrow such a cry
Gan rear, thorough the company,
That to the heav'n heard was the soun',
And under th' earth as far adown,
And wildë beastës for the fear
So suddenly affrayed were,
That for the doubt, while they might dure,¹⁷
They ran as of their lives unsure,
From the woodës into the plain,
And from valleys the high mountain
They sought, and ran as beastës blind,
That clean forgotten had their kind.¹⁸

The lords of the laggard host ask the woe-begone lady what should be done; she answers that nothing can now avail, but that for remembrance they should build in their land, open to public view, "in some notable old city," a chapel engraved with some memorial of the queen. And straightway, with a sigh, she also "pass'd her breath."

Then said the lordës of the host,
And so concluded least and most,
That they would ay in houses of thack¹⁹
Their livës lead, and wear but black,
And forsake all their pleasancess,
And turn all joy to penances;
And bare the dead prince to the barge,
And named them should²⁰ have the charge;
And to the hearse where lay the queen
The remnant went, and down on kneen,
Holding their hands on high, gan cry,
"Mercy! mercy!" evereach thry;²¹
And curs'd the time that ever sloth
Should have such masterdom of troth.
And to the barge, a longë mile,
They bare her forth; and, in a while,
All the ladies, one and one,

¹¹ Press, crowd.

¹² Confession and prayer were the usual preliminaries of any enterprise in those superstitious days; and in these days of enlightenment the fashion yet lingers among the most superstitious class—the fisher-folk.

¹³ To pray for success.

¹⁴ Reproach, slander.

¹⁵ Waiting for.

¹⁶ The most piteous.

¹⁷ While they had yet a chance of safety. ¹⁸ Nature.

¹⁹ Thatch; they would quit their castles and houses of stone for humble huts.

²⁰ Those who should.

²¹ Each one thrice.

By companies were brought each one.
 And pass'd the sea, and took the land,
 And in new hearses, on a sand,
 Put and brought were all anon,
 Unto a city clos'd with stone,
 Where it had been used ay
 The kinges of the land to lay,
 After they reigned in honours ;
 And writ was which were conqueroirs ;
 In an abbey of nunnēs black,
 Which accustom'd were to wake,
 And of usāge rise each a-night,
 To pray for ev'ry living wight.
 And so befell, as is the guise,
 Ordain'd and said was the service
 Of the prince and eke of the queen,
 So devoutly as mightē be'n ;
 And, after that, about the hearses,
 Many orisons and verses,
 Withoutē note¹ full softēly
 Said were, and that full heartily ;
 That all the night, till it was day,
 The people in the church gan pray
 Unto the Holy Trinity,
 Of those soulēs to have pity.

And when the nightē past and run
 Was, and the newē day begun,—
 The young morrow with rayēs red,
 Which from the sun all o'er gan spread,
 Attemper'd² clearē was and fair,
 And made a time of wholesome air,—
 Befell a wondrous case³ and strange
 Among the people, and gan change
 Soon the word, and ev'ry woe
 Unto a joy, and some to two.

A bird, all feather'd blue and green,
 With brightē rays like gold between,
 As small thread over ev'ry joint,
 All full of colour strange and coint,⁴
 Uncouth⁵ and wonderful to sight,
 Upon the queenē's hearse gan light,
 And sung full low and softēly
 Three songēs in their harmony,
 Unletted of⁶ every wight ;
 Till at the last an aged knight,
 Which seem'd a man in greatē thought,
 Like as he set all thing at nought,
 With visage and eyes all forwept,⁷
 And pale, as a man long unslept,
 By the hearses as he stood,
 With hasty handling of his hood
 Unto a prince that by him past,
 Made the bird somewhat aghast.⁸
 Wherefore he rose and left his song,
 And departed from us among,
 And spread his wingēs for to pass
 By the place where he enter'd was.
 And in his haste, shortly to tell,
 Him hurt, that backward down he fell,

¹ Without music—although the office for the dead was generally sung.

² Clement, calm.

⁴ Quaint, strange.

⁶ Unhindered by.

⁸ Frightened.

¹⁰ Smooth.

¹² Arranged.

³ Chance, event.

⁵ Unfamiliar.

⁷ All steeped in tears.

⁹ Lamentation.

¹¹ Black.

¹³ Bud.

From a window richly paint,
 With lives of many a divers saint,
 And beat his wingēs and bled fast,
 And of the hurt thus died and past ;
 And lay there well an hour and more.
 Till, at the last, of birds a score
 Came and assembled at the place
 Where the window broken was,
 And made such waimentatioun,⁹
 That pity was to hear the soun',
 And the warbles of their throats,
 And the cōplaint of their notes,
 Which from joy clean was reversed.
 And of them one the glass soon pierced,
 And in his beak, of colours nine,
 An herb he brought, flow'rless, all green,
 Full of smallē leaves, and plain,¹⁰
 Swart,¹¹ and long, with many a vein.
 And where his fellow lay thus dead,
 This herb he down laid by his head,
 And dressed¹² it full softēly,
 And hung his head, and stood thereby.
 Which herb, in less than half an hour,
 Gan over all knit,¹³ and after flow'r
 Full out ; and waxed ripe the seed ;
 And, right as one another feed
 Would, in his beak he took the grain,
 And in his fellow's beak certāin
 It put, and thus within the third¹⁴
 Upstood and pruned him the bird,
 Which dead had been in all our sight ;
 And both together forth their flight
 Took, singing, from us, and their leave ;
 Was none disturb them would nor grieve.
 And, when they parted were and gone,
 Th' abbess the seedēs soon each one
 Gathered had, and in her hand
 The herb she took, well āvisand¹⁵
 The leaf, the seed, the stalk, the flow'r,
 And said it had a good savour,
 And was no common herb to find,
 And well approv'd of uncouth kind,¹⁶
 And more than other virtuous ;
 Whoso might it have for to use
 In his need, flower, leaf, or grain,
 Of his heal might be certāin.
 [She] laid it down upon the hearse
 Where lay the queen ; and gan rehearse
 Each one to other what they had seen.
 And, taling thus,¹⁷ the seed wax'd green,
 And on the dry hearse gan to spring,—
 Which me thought was a wondrous thing,—
 And, after that, flow'r and new seed ;¹⁸
 Of which the people all took heed,
 And said it was some great mirācle,
 Or medicine fine more than triācle ;¹⁹
 And were well done there to assay
 If it might ease, in any way,
 The corpses, which with torchēlight

¹⁴ Within the third hour after the bird had fallen dead.

¹⁵ Considering ; present participle from "advise" or "advise."

¹⁶ Strange nature.

¹⁷ As they gossiped thus.

¹⁸ To flower and seed anew.

¹⁹ Or "treacle ;" corrupted from Latin, "theriaca," an antidote. The word is used for medicine in general.

They waked had there all that night.
 Soon did the lordës there consent,
 And all the people thereto content,
 With easy words and little fare ;¹
 And made the queenë's visage bare,
 Which showed was to all about,
 Wherefore in swoon fell all the rout,²
 And were so sorry, most and least,
 That long of weeping they not ceas'd ;
 For of their lord the rémembrance
 Unto them was such displeasance,³
 That for to live they called pain,
 So were they very true and plain,
 And after this the good abbés
 Of the grains gan choose and dress⁴
 Three, with her fingers clean and smale,
 And in the queenë's mouth, by tale,
 One after other, full easily
 She put, and ake full cunningly.⁵
 Which showed somë such virtüe,
 That proved was the medicine true.
 For with a smiling countenance
 The queen uprose, and of usance⁶
 As she was wont, to ev'ry wight
 She made good cheer ;⁷ for whichë sight
 The people, kneeling on the stones,
 Thought they in heav'n were, soul and bones ;
 And to the prince, where that he lay,
 They went to make the same assay.⁸
 And when the queen it understood,
 And how the medicine was good,
 She pray'd that she might have the grains,
 To relieve him from the pains
 Which she and he had both endur'd.
 And to him went, and so him cur'd,
 That, within a little space,
 Lusty and fresh alive he was,
 And in good heal, and whole of speech,
 And laugh'd, and said, "Gramercy, leach !" ⁹
 For which the joy throughout the town
 So great was, that the bellës' soun'
 Affray'd the people a journey¹⁰
 About the city ev'ry way ;
 And came and ask'd the cause, and why
 They rungen were so statëly.¹¹
 And after that the queen, th' abbés,
 Made diligence,¹² ere they would cease,
 Such, that of ladies soon a rout¹³
 Suing¹⁴ the queen was all about ;
 And, call'd by name each one and told,¹⁵

¹ Ake, trouble.³ Cause of grief.⁵ Skillfully.⁷ Showed a gracious countenance.⁸ Trial, experiment.⁹ "Great thanks, my physician !"² Company, crowd.⁴ Prepare.⁶ Custom.

Was none forgotten, young nor old.
 There mightë men see joyës new,
 When the medicine, fine and true,
 Thus restor'd had ev'ry wight,
 So well the queen as the knight,
 Unto perfect joy and heal,
 That floating they were in such weal¹⁶
 As folk that woulden in no wise
 Desire more perfect paradise.

On the morrow a general assembly was convoked, and it was resolved that the wedding-feast should be celebrated within the island. Messengers were sent to strange realms, to invite kings, queens, duchesses, and princesses ; and a special embassy was despatched, in the magic barge, to seek the poet's mistress—who was brought back after fourteen days, to the great joy of the queen. Next day took place the wedding of the prince and all the knights to the queen and all the ladies ; and a three months' feast followed, on a large plain "under a wood, in a champaign, betwixt a river and a well, where never had abbey nor cell been, nor church, house, nor village, in time of any mannë's age." On the day after the general wedding, all entreated the poet's lady to consent to crown his love with marriage ; she yielded ; the bridal was splendidly celebrated ; and to the sound of marvellous music the poet awoke, to find neither lady nor creature—but only old portraiture on the tapestry, of horsemen, hawks, and hounds, and hurt deer full of wounds. Great was his grief that he had lost all the bliss of his dream ; and he concludes by praying his lady so to accept his love-service, that the dream may turn to reality.

Or ellës, without more I pray,
 That this night, ere it be day,
 I may unto my dream return,
 And sleeping so forth ay sojourn
 Aboutë the Isle of Pleasance,
 Under my lady's óbeisance,¹⁶
 In her service, and in such wise,
 As it may please her to devise ;
 And gracë once to be accept',
 Like as I dreamed when I slept,
 And dure a thousand year and ten
 In her good will : Amen, amen !

¹⁰ To the distance of a day's journey.¹¹ Proudly, solemnly.¹² To administer the grain to the dead ladies.¹³ Following.¹⁴ Swimming in such happiness.¹⁵ Subject to my lady.¹⁶ Numbered.

THE PROLOGUE TO THE LEGEND OF GOOD WOMEN.

[SOME difference of opinion exists as to the date at which Chaucer wrote "The Legend of Good Women." Those who would fix that date at a period not long before the poet's death—who would place the poem, indeed, among his closing labours—support their opinion by the fact that the Prologue recites most of Chaucer's principal works, and glances, besides, at a long array of other productions, too many to be fully catalogued. But, on the other hand, it is objected that the "Legend" makes no mention of "The Canterbury Tales" as such; while two of those Tales—the Knight's and the Second Nun's—are enumerated by the titles which they bore as separate compositions, before they were incorporated in the great collection: "The Love of Palamon and Arcite," and "The Life of Saint Cecile."¹ Tyrwhitt seems perfectly justified in placing the composition of the poem immediately before that of Chaucer's *magnum opus*, and after the marriage of Richard II. to his first queen, Anne of Bohemia. That event took place in 1382; and since it is to Anne that the poet refers when he makes Alceestis bid him give his poem to the queen "at Eltham or at Sheen," the "Legend" could not have been written earlier. The old editions tell us that "several ladies in the Court took offence at Chaucer's large speeches against the untruth of women; therefore the queen enjoin'd him to compile this book in the commendation of sundry maidens and wives, who show'd themselves faithful to faithless men. This seems to have been written after *The Flower and the Leaf*." Evidently it was, for distinct references to that poem are to be found in the Prologue; but more interesting is the indication which it furnishes, that "Troilus and Cressida" was the work, not of the poet's youth, but of his maturer age. We could hardly expect the queen—whether of Love or of England—to demand seriously from Chaucer a retractation of sentiments which he had expressed a full generation before, and for which he had made atonement by the splendid praises of true love sung in "The Court of Love," "The Cuckoo and the Nightingale," and other poems of youth and middle life. But "Troilus and Cressida" is coupled with "The Romance of the Rose," as one of the poems which had given offence to the servants and the God of Love; therefore we may suppose it to have more prominently engaged courtly notice at a late period of the poet's life, than even its undoubted popularity could explain. At whatever date, or in whatever circumstances, undertaken, "The Legend of Good Women" is a fragment. There are several signs that it was designed to contain the stories of twenty-five ladies, although the number of the good women is in the poem itself set down at nineteen; but nine legends only were actually composed, or have come down to us. They are, those of Cleopatra Queen of Egypt (126 lines), Thisbe of Babylon (218), Dido Queen of Carthage (442), Hypsipyle and Medea (312), Lucrece of Rome (206), Ariadne of Athens (340), Philomela (167), Phyllis (168), and Hypermnestra (162). Prefixed to these stories, which are translated or imitated from Ovid, is a Prologue containing 579 lines—the only part of the "Legend" given in the present edition. It is by far the most original, the strongest, and most pleasing part of the poem; the description of spring, and of his enjoyment of that season, are in Chaucer's best manner; and the political philosophy by which Alceestis mitigates the wrath of Cupid, adds another to the abounding proofs that, for his knowledge of the world, Chaucer fairly merits the epithet of "many-sided" which Shakespeare has won by his knowledge of man.]

A THOUSAND times I have heard¹ tell,
That there is joy in heav'n, and pain in hell;
And I accord² it well that it is so;
But, natheless, yet wot³ I well also,
That there is none dwelling in this country
That either hath in heav'n or hell y-be;⁴
Nor may of it no other wayes witten⁵

¹ See note 19, page 171.

² Know.

³ Grant agree.

⁴ Been.

But as he hath heard said, or found it written;
For by assay⁶ there may no man it prove.⁶

But God forbid but that men should believe
Well more thing than men have seen with eye!
Men shall not weenen ev'ry thing a lie
But if⁷ himself it seeth, or else do'th;
For, God wot, thing is never the less sooth,⁸

⁵ Practical trial.

⁶ Prove, test.

⁷ Unless.

⁸ True.

Though ev'ry wightö may it not y-see.
 Bernard, the Monkë, saw not all, pardie!¹
 Then mustö we to bookës that we find
 (Through which that oldë thingës be in mind),
 And to the doctrine of these oldë wise,
 Givë credence, in ev'ry skilful² wise,
 That tellen of these old approved stories,
 Of holiness, of regnës,³ of victories,
 Of love, of hate, and other sundry things
 Of which I may not makë réhearsings;
 And if that oldë bookës were away,
 Y-lorn were of all rémembrance the key.
 Well ought we, then, to honour and believe
 These bookës, where we have none other preve.⁴

And as for me, though that I know but lite,
 On bookës for to read I me delight,
 And to them give I faith and good credence,
 And in my heart have them in reverence,
 So heartily, that there is gamë none⁵
 That from my bookës maketh me to go'n,
 But it be seldom on the holyday;
 Save, certainly, when that the month of May
 Is comen, and I hear the fowlës sing,
 And that the flowers ginnen for to spring,
 Farewell my book and my devotiön!

Now have I then such a condition,
 That, above all the flowers in the mead,
 Then love I most these flowers white and red,
 Such that men callë Day's-eyes in our town;
 To them have I so great affectiön,
 As I said erst, when comen is the May,
 That in my bed there dawneth me no day
 That I n'am⁶ up, and walking in the mead,
 To see this flow'r against the sunnë spread,
 When it upriseth early by the morrow;
 That blissful sight softeneth all my sorrow,
 So glad am I, when that I have preséce
 Of it, to do it allë reverence,
 As she that is of allë flowers flow'r,
 Fulfilled of all virtue and honoür,
 And ever alike fair, and fresh of hue;
 As well in winter, as in summer new,
 This love I ever, and shall until I die;
 All⁷ swear I not, of this I will not lie,
 There loved no wight hotter in his life.
 And when that it is eve, I runnë blife,⁸
 As soon as ever the sun begins to west,⁹
 To see this flow'r, how it will go to rest,
 For fear of night, so hateth she darknës!
 Her cheer¹⁰ is plainly spread in the brightnës
 Of the sunnë, for there it will uncloze.
 Alas! that I had English, rhyme or prose,
 Sufficiënt this flow'r to praise aright!
 But help me, ye that have cunning or might;¹¹
 Ye lovers, that can make of sentiment,
 In this case ought ye to be diligent

¹ A proverbial saying, signifying that even the wisest, or those who claim to be the wisest, cannot know everything. Saint Bernard, who was the last, or among the last, of the Fathers, lived in the first half of the twelfth century.

² Reasonable.

³ Reigns, kingdoms.

⁴ Proof; prove.

⁵ No amusement. Compare Chaucer's account of his habits, in "The House of Fame," page 285.

⁶ Am not.

⁷ Although.

⁸ Quickly, eagerly.

⁹ To decline westward.

¹⁰ Countenance.

¹¹ Skill or power.

To further me somewhat in my laboür,
 Whether ye be with the Leaf or the Flow'r;¹²
 For well I wot, that ye have herebeforn
 Of making ropen,¹³ and led away the corn;
 And I come after, gleaning here and there,
 And am full glad if I may find an ear
 Of any goodly word that you have left.
 And though it hap me to rehearsen eft¹⁴
 What ye have in your freshë songës said,
 Forbearë me, and be not evil apaid,¹⁵
 Since that ye see I do it in th' honoür
 Of love, and eke in service of the flow'r
 Whom that I serve as I have wit or might.¹⁶
 She is the clearness, and the very¹⁷ light,
 That in this darkë world me winds¹⁸ and leads;
 The heart within my sorrowful breast you
 dreads,

And loves so sore, that ye be, verily,
 The mistress of my wit, and nothing I.
 My word, my works, are knit so in your bond,
 That, as a harp obeyeth to the hand,
 That makes it sound after his fingering,
 Right so may ye out of my heartë bring
 Such voice, right as you list, to laugh or plain;¹⁹
 Be ye my guide, and lady sovërain.
 As to mine earthly god, to you I call,
 Both in this work, and in my sorrows all.

But wherefore that I spake to give credence
 To old stories, and do them reverence,
 And that men mustë morë things believe
 Than they may see at eye, or ellës preve,⁴
 That shall I say, when that I see my time;
 I may not all at onës speak in rhyme.
 My busy ghost,²⁰ that thirsteth always new
 To see this flow'r so young, so fresh of hue,
 Constrained me with so greedy desire,
 That in my heart I feelë yet the fire,
 That madë me to rise ere it were day,—
 And this was now the first morrow of May,—
 With dreadful heart, and glad devotiön,
 For to be at the resurrection
 Of this flower, when that it should uncloze
 Against the sun, that rose as red as rose,
 That in the breast was of the beast²¹ that day,
 That Agenorë's daughter²² led away.
 And down on knees anon right I me set,
 And as I could this freshë flow'r I gret,²³
 Kneeling alway, till it unclosed was,
 Upon the smallë, softë, sweetë grass,
 That was with flowers sweet embroider'd all,
 Of such sweetness and such odoür o'er all,²⁴
 That, for to speak of gum, or herb, or tree,
 Comparison may none y-maked be;
 For it surmounteth plainly all odoürs,
 And for rich beauty the most gay of flow'ra.
 Forgotten had the earth his poor estate

¹² See introductory note to "The Flower and the Leaf," pages 224-25.

¹³ Reaped. The meaning is, that the "lovers" have long ago said all that can be said, by way of poetry, or "making," on the subject. See note 10, page 273.

¹⁴ Again.

¹⁵ Displeased.

¹⁶ The poet glides here into an address to his lady.

¹⁷ True.

¹⁸ Turns, guides.

¹⁹ Complain, mourn.

²⁰ Spirit.

²¹ The (constellation of the) Bull.

²² Europa. See note 6, page 438.

²³ Greeted.

²⁴ Everywhere.

Of winter, that him naked made and mate,¹
 And with his sword of cold so sorē grieved;
 Now hath th' attemper² sun all that releaved³
 That naked was, and clad it new again.
 The smallē fowlē, of the season fain,⁴
 That of the panter⁵ and the net be scap'd,
 Upon the fowler, that them made awhap'd⁶
 In winter, and destroyed had their brood,
 In his despite them thought it did them good
 To sing of him, and in their song despise
 The foulē churl, that, for his covetise,⁷
 Had them betrayed with his sophistry.⁸
 This was their song: "The fowler we defy,
 And all his craft:" and somē sungē clear
 Layēs of love, that joy it was to hear,
 In worshipping⁹ and praising of their make;¹⁰
 And for the blissful newē summer's sake,
 Upon the branches full of blossoms soft,
 In their delight they turned them full oft,
 And sungē, "Blessed be Saint Valentine!"¹¹
 For on his day I chose you to be mine,
 Withoutē répenting, my heartē sweet."
 And therewithal their beaks began to meet,
 Yielding honoúr, and humble obeisānces,
 To love, and did their other observānces
 That longen unto Love and to Natúre;
 Construe that as you list, I do no cure.¹²
 And those that haddē done unkindēness,¹³
 As doth the tidife, for newfangleness,¹⁴
 Besoughtē mercy for their trespassing,
 And humbly sangē their répenting,
 And swore upon the blossoms to be true,
 So that their matēs would upon them rue,¹⁵
 And at the lastē madē their accord.¹⁶
 All¹⁷ found they Danger¹⁸ for a time a lord,
 Yet Pity, through her strongē gentle might,
 Forgave, and madē mercy pass aright
 Through Innocence, and ruled Courtesy.
 But I ne call not innocence folly
 Nor false pity, for virtue is the mean,
 As Ethic¹⁹ saith, in such manner I mean.
 And thus these fowlē, void of all malice,
 Accorded unto Love, and leftē vice
 Of hate, and sangē all of one accord,
 "Welcome, Summer, our governor and lord!"
 And Zephyrus and Flora gentilly
 Gave to the flowers, soft and tenderly,
 Theirsweetē breath, and made them for to spread,
 As god and goddess of the flow'ry mead;
 In which me thought I mightē, day by day,
 Dweller alway, the jolly month of May,
 Withoutē sleep, withoutē meat or drink.
 Adown full softly I began to sink,

1 Dejected, lifeless. 2 Temperate.
 3 Furnished anew with leaves.
 4 Glad. 5 Draw-net, bag-net.
 6 Terrified, confounded.
 7 Greed. 8 Stratagems, deceptions.
 9 Honouring. 10 Mate.
 11 See "The Assembly of Fowls," pages 220-221.
 12 I care nothing.
 13 Committed offence against natural laws.
 14 The titmouse, or any other small bird, which sometimes brings up the cuckoo's young when its own have been destroyed. See note 24, page 223.
 15 Take pity.
 16 Reconciliation.
 17 Although. 18 Anger, disdain.
 19 The Ethics of Aristotle.
 20 Resolved, prepared. 21 Do not fancy.

And, leaning on mine elbow and my side
 The longē day I shope me²² to abide,
 For nothing ellēs, and I shall not lie,
 But for to look upon the daisy;
 That men by reason well it callē may
 The Dayē's-eye, or else the Eye of Day,
 The empress and the flow'r of flowers all.
 I pray to God that fairē may she fall!
 And all that lovē flowers, for her sake:
 But, nathelessē, ween not²¹ that I make²²
 In praising of the Flow'r against the Leaf,
 No more than of the corn against the sheaf;
 For as to me is lever none nor lother,²³
 I n'am withholden yet with neither n' other.²⁴
 Nor I n'ot²⁵ who serves Leaf, nor who the Flow'r;
 Well brookē they²⁶ their service or labour!
 For this thing is all of another tun,²⁷
 Of old story, ere such thing was begun.

When that the sun out of the south gan west,
 And that this flow'r gan close, and go to rest,
 For darkness of the night, the which she dread;²⁸
 Home to my house full swiftly I me sped,
 To go to rest, and early for to rise,
 To see this flower spread, as I devise.²⁹
 And in a little harbour that I have,
 That benched was of turfēs fresh y-grave,³⁰
 I bade men shouldē me my couchē make;
 For dainty³¹ of the newē summer's sake,
 I bade them strowē flowers on my bed.
 When I was laid, and had mine eyen hid,
 I fell asleep; within an hour or two,
 Me mette³² how I lay in the meadow tho,³³
 To see this flow'r that I love so and dread.
 And from afar came walking in the mead
 The God of Love, and in his hand a queen;
 And she was clad in royal habit green;
 A fret³⁴ of gold she haddē next her hair,
 And upon that a white coron she bare,
 With flowrons³⁵ small, and, as I shall not lie,
 For all the world right as a daisy
 Y-crowned is, with whitē leavēs lite,³⁶
 So were the flowrons of her crownē white.
 For of one pearlē, fine, orientiāl,
 Her whitē crownē was y-maked all,
 For which the whitē crown above the green
 Madē her like a daisy for to see'n,³⁷
 Consider'd eke her fret of gold above.
 Y-clothed was this mighty God of Love
 In silk embroider'd, full of greenē greves,³⁸
 In which there was a fret of red rose leaves,
 The freshest since the world was first begun.
 His gilt hair was y-crowned with a sun,
 Instead of gold, for³⁹ heaviness and weight;

22 Rhyme, make (this poem).
 23 Neither is more nor less liked.
 24 I am not bound by, holden to, either the one or the other.
 25 Nor do I know.
 26 Much may they profit by—well may they enjoy.
 27 Wine of another tun—a quite different matter.
 28 Dreaded. 29 Describe.
 30 With turfs freshly dug or cut. Compare the description of the harbour in "The Flower and the Leaf," page 226.
 31 Pleasure. 32 I dreamed.
 33 Then. 34 Band.
 35 Florets; little flowers on the disk of the main flower; French, "fleuron."
 36 Small. 37 To look upon.
 38 Boughs. 39 In order to avoid.

Therewith me thought his face shone so bright,
That well unneþhes might I him behold;
And in his hand me thought I saw him hold
Two fiery dartës, as the gledës¹ red;
And angel-like his wingës saw I spread.
And all be² that men say that blind is he,
Algate³ me thoughtë that he might well see;
For sternly upon me he gan behold,
So that his looking did my heartë cold.⁴
And by the hand he held this noble queen,
Crowned with white, and clothed all in green,
So womanly, so benign, and so meek,
That in this worldë, though that men would seek,
Half of her beauty shouldë they not find
In creatüre that formed is by Kind;⁵
And therefore may I say, as thinketh me,
This song in praising of this lady free:

"Hide, Absolon, thy giltë⁶ tresses clear;
Kether, lay thou thy meekness all adown;
Hide, Jonathan, all thy friendly mannëre,
Penelopë, and Marcia Catoün,⁷
Make of your wifehood no comparisoün;
Hide ye your beauties, Isoude⁸ and Helëne;
My lady comes, that all this may distain.⁹

"Thy fairë body let it not appear,
Lavine;¹⁰ and thou, Lucrece of Romë town;
And Polyxene,¹¹ that boughtë love so dear,
And Cleopatra, with all thy passioün,
Hide ye your truth of love, and your renown;
And thou, Thisbe, that hadst of love such pain;
My lady comes, that all this may distain.

"Hero, Didó, Laodamia, y-fere,
And Phyllis, hanging for Demophoön,
And Canacé, espiëd by thy cheer,
Hypsipylë, betrayed by Jasoün,
Make of your truthë neither boast nor soun';
Nor Hypermnestr' nor Ariadne, ye twain;
My lady comes, that all this may distain."

This ballad may full well y-sungen be,
As I have said erst, by my lady free;
For, certainly, all these may not suffice
T' appairë¹² with my lady in no wise;
For, as the sunnë will the fire distain,
So passeth all my lady sovereign,
That is so good, so fair, so debonair,
I pray to God that ever fall her fair!
For n' haddë comfort been of her presënce,¹³
I had been dead, without any defence,
For dread of Lovë's wordës, and his cheer;
As, when time is, hereafter ye shall hear.

Behind this God of Love, upon the green,

¹ Glowing coals.

² Although.

³ At all events.

⁴ Made my heart grow cold.

⁵ Nature.

⁶ Golden.

⁷ Mr Bell thinks that Chaucer here praises the complaisance of Marcia, the wife of Cato, in complying with his will when he made her over to his friend Hortensius. It would be in better keeping with the spirit of the poet's praise, to believe that we should read "Porcia Catoun"—Porcia the daughter of Cato, who was married to Brutus, and whose perfect wifehood has been celebrated in The Franklin's Tale. See note 8, page 129.

⁸ See note 33, page 219.

⁹ Outdo, obscure.

¹⁰ Lavinia, the heroine of the Æneid, who became the wife of Æneas.

¹¹ Polyxena, daughter of Priam, king of Troy, fell in

I saw coming of Ladies nineteen,
In royal habit, a full easy pace;
And after them of women such a trace,¹⁴
That, since that God Adam had made of earth,
The thirdë part of mankind, or the ferth,¹⁵
Ne ween'd I not¹⁶ by possibility,
Had ever in this widë world y-be;¹⁷
And true of love these women were each one.
Now whether was that a wonder thing, or non,¹⁸
That, right anon as that they gan espy
This flow'r, which that I call the daisy,
Full suddenly they stenten¹⁹ all at once,
And kneeled down, as it were for the nonce,
And sangë with one voice, "Heal and honour
To truth of womanhead, and to this flow'r,
That bears our aller prize in figuring;²⁰
Her whitë crownë bears the witnessing!"
And with that word, a-compass environ²¹
They settë them full softëly adown.
First sat the God of Love, and since²² his queen,
With the whitë coronë, clad in green;
And sithen²³ all the remnant by and by,
As they were of estate, full courteously;
And not a word was spoken in the place,
The mountance²⁴ of a furlong way of space.

I, kneeling by this flow'r, in good intent
Abode, to knowë what this people meant,
As still as any stone, till, at the last,
The God of Love on me his eyen cast,
And said, "Who kneeleth there?" and I answer'd
Unto his asking, when that I it heard,
And said, "It am I," and came to him near,
And salued²⁵ him. Quoth he, "What dost thou
here,

So nigh mine owen flow'r, so boldëly?
It werë better worthy, truëly,
A worm to nighë²⁶ near my flow'r than thou."
"And why, Sir," quoth I, "an'²⁷ it liketh you?"
"For thou," quoth he, "art thereto nothing able,
It is my relic,²⁸ dign²⁹ and delectable,
And thou my foe, and all my folk warrayest,³⁰
And of mine oldë servants thou missayest,
And hind'rest them, with thy translatiön,
And lettest³¹ folk from their devotiön
To servë me, and holdest it folly
To servë Love; thou may'st it not deny;
For in plain text, withoutë need of glose,³²
Thou hast translated the Romance of the Rose,
That is a heresy against my law,
And maketh wisë folk from me withdraw;
And of Cresside thou hast said as thee list,
That maketh men to women less to trust,
That be as true as e'er was any steel.

love with Achilles, and, when he was killed (note 34, page 219), she fled to the Greek camp, and slew herself on the tomb of her hero-lover.

¹² With which to impair, surpass in beauty or honour.

¹³ If it had not been for the comfort afforded by her presence.

¹⁴ Train.

¹⁵ Fourth.

¹⁶ I never fancied.

¹⁷ Been.

¹⁸ Not.

¹⁹ Stopped.

²⁰ That in its figure bears the prize from us all.

²¹ All around in a ring.

²² Then.

²³ Afterwards.

²⁴ Extent, duration. See note 37, page 245.

²⁵ Saluted.

²⁶ Approach, draw nigh.

²⁷ If.

²⁸ Emblem; or cherished treasure; like the relics at the shrines of saints.

²⁹ Worthy.

³⁰ Molestest, censured.

³¹ Preventest.

³² Comment, gloss.

Of thine answer advise thee right weel ;¹
 For though that thou reniëd hast my lay,²
 As other wretches have done many a day,
 By Saintë Venus, that my mother is,
 If that thou live, thou shalt repentë this,
 So cruelly, that it shall well be seen."

Then spake this Lady, clothed all in green,
 And saidë, "God, right of your courtesy,
 Ye mightë hearken if he can reply
 Against all this, that ye have to him moved ;³
 A goddë shouldë not be thus aggrieved,
 But of his deity he shall be stable,
 And thereto gracious and merciäble.⁴
 And if ye n'ere⁵ a god, that knoweth all,
 Then might it be, as I you tellë shall,
 This man to you may falsely be accused,
 Whereas by right him ought to be excused ;
 For in your court is many a losengeour,⁶
 And many a quaint toteler accusour,⁷
 That tabour⁸ in your earës many a soun',
 Right after their imaginatioun,
 To have your dalliances,⁹ and for envý ;
 These be the causes, and I shall not lie,
 Envy is lavender¹⁰ of the Court alway,
 For she departeth neither night nor day
 Out of the house of Cæsar, thus saith Dant' ;
 Whoso that go'th, algate she shall not want.¹¹
 And eke, parauntre,¹² for this man is nice,¹³
 He mightë do it guessing¹⁴ no malice ;
 For he useth thingës for to make ;¹⁵
 Him recketh naught of¹⁶ what mattëre he take ;
 Or he was bidden makë thilkë tway¹⁷
 Of¹⁸ some persón, and durst it not withsay ;¹⁹
 Or him repenteth utterly of this.
 He hath not done so grievously amiss,
 To translatë what oldë clerkës write,
 As though that he of malice would endite,²⁰
 Despite of Love, and had himself it wrought.
 This should a righteous lord have in his thought,
 And not be like tyrants of Lombardy,
 That have no regard but at tyranny.²¹
 For he that king or lord is naturel,
 Him oughtë not be tyrant or cruël,
 As is a farmer,²² to do the harm he can ;
 He mustë think, it is his liegëman,
 And is his treasure, and his gold in coffer ;

This is the sentence²³ of the philosopher :
 A king to keep his lieges in justice,
 Withoutë doubtë that is his office.
 All²⁴ will he keep his lords in their degree,—
 As it is right and skilful²⁵ that they be,
 Enhanced and honouëd, and most dear,
 For they be halfë gods²⁶ in this world here,—
 Yet must he do both right to poor and rich,
 All be²⁷ that their estate be not y-lich ;²⁸
 And have of poorë folk compassion.
 For lo ! the gentle kind²⁹ of the lion ;
 For when a fly offendeth him, or biteth,
 He with his tail away the flyë smiteth,
 All easily ; for of his genterý³⁰
 Him deigneth not to wreak him on a fly,
 As doth a cur, or else another beast.
 In noble corage ought to be arrest,³¹
 And weighen ev'rything by equity,
 And ever have regard to his degree.
 For, Sir, it is no mastery for a lord
 To damn³² a man, without answer of word ;
 And for a lord, that is full foul to use,³³
 And it be so he may him not excuse,³⁴
 But asketh mercy with a dreadful³⁵ heart,
 And proffereth him, right in his bare shirt,
 To be right at your owen judgëment,
 Then ought a god, by short advisëment,³⁶
 Consider his own honouër, and his trespass ;
 For since no pow'r of death lies in this case,
 You ought to be the lighter merciäble ;³⁷
 Lettë³⁸ your ire, and be somewhat tractäble !
 This man hath served you of his cunning,³⁹
 And further'd well your law in his making.⁴⁰
 Albeit that he cannot well endite,
 Yet hath he madë lewëd⁴¹ folk delight
 To servë you, in praising of your name.
 He made the book that hight the House of Fame,
 And eke the Death of Blanchë the Duchess,
 And the Parliament of Fowlës, as I guess,
 And all the Love of Palamon and Arcite,⁴²
 Of Thebes, though the story is known lite ;⁴³
 And many a hymnë for your holydays,
 That hightë ballads, roundels, virälays.
 And, for to speak of other holiness,
 He hath in prosë trānalatéd Boece,⁴⁴
 And made the Life also of Saint Cecile ;⁴⁵

¹ Consider right well.

² Abjured my law or religion.

³ All this accusation that you have moved, advanced, against him.

⁴ Merciful.

⁵ Were not.

⁶ Deceiver. See note 5, page 170, on a parallel passage in *The Nun's Priest's Tale*.

⁷ Many a strange prating accuser. "Toteler" is an old form of the word "tattler," from the Anglo-Saxon, "totelan," to talk much, to tattle.

⁸ Drum.

⁹ Pleasant conversation, company.

¹⁰ Washerwoman, laundress ; the word represents "meretrice" in Dante's original—meaning a courtesan ; but we can well understand that Chaucer thought it prudent, and at the same time more true to the moral state of the English Court, to change the character assigned to Envy. He means that Envy is perpetually at Court, like some garrulous, bitter old woman employed there in the most servile offices, who remains at her post through all the changes among the courtiers. The passage cited from Dante will be found in the "Inferno," canto xiii. 64-69.

¹¹ At all events she will not be wanting.

¹² Peradventure.

¹³ Foolish.

¹⁴ Thinking.

¹⁵ To compose poetry.

¹⁶ He cares nothing.

¹⁷ Compose those two.

¹⁸ By.

¹⁹ Refuse, deny.

²⁰ Would himself endite, out of malice.

²¹ Chaucer says that the usurping lords who seized on the government of the free Lombard cities, had no regard for any rule of government save sheer tyranny—but a natural lord, and no usurper, ought not to be a tyrant.

²² One who merely farms power or revenue for his own purposes and his own gain.

²³ Opinion, sentiment.

²⁴ Although.

²⁵ Reasonable.

²⁶ Demigods.

²⁷ Alike.

²⁸ Nature.

²⁹ Nobleness.

³⁰ In a noble nature ought to be self-restraint.

³¹ Condemn.

³² Such a practice is most infamous.

³³ And if he (the offender) cannot excuse himself.

³⁴ Fearing, timid.

³⁵ Deliberation.

³⁶ The more easily merciful.

³⁷ Restrain, or dismiss.

³⁸ Ability.

³⁹ Poetising.

⁴⁰ Ignorant.

⁴¹ See the introductory note, page 281.

⁴² Little.

⁴³ "De Consolatione Philosophiæ," to which frequent reference is made in *The Canterbury Tales*. See, for instances, note 3, page 46 ; and note 6, page 121.

He made also, gone is a great while,
 Origenes upon the Magdalene.¹
 Him oughte now to have the lessē pain ;²
 He hath made many a lay, and many a thing.
 Now as ye be a god, and eke a king,
 I your Alcestis,³ whilom queen of Thrace,
 I askē you this man, right of your grace,
 That ye him never hurt in all his life ;
 And he shall swearē to you, and that blife,⁴
 He shall no more aguilten⁵ in this wise,
 But shall maken, as ye will him devise,
 Of women true in loving all their life,
 Whereso ye will, of maiden or of wife,
 And further you as much as he missaid
 Or⁶ in the Rose, or ellēs in Cresseide."

The God of Love answered her anon :
 "Madame," quoth he, "it is so long agone
 That I you knew, so charitable and true,
 That never yet, since that the world was new,
 To me ne found I better none than ye ;
 If that I wouldē savē my degree,
 I may nor will not warnē⁷ your request ;
 All lies in you, do with him as you lest.
 I all forgive withoutē longer space ;⁸
 For he who gives a gift, or doth a grace,
 Do it betimes, his thank is well the more ;⁹
 And deemē¹⁰ ye what he shall do therefor.
 Go thankē now my Lady here," quoth he.
 I rose, and down I set me on my knee,
 And saidē thus ; "Madame, the God above
 Foryildē¹¹ you that ye the God of Love
 Have madē me his wrathē to forgive ;
 And gracē me¹² so longē for to live,
 That I may knowē soothly what ye be,
 That have me help'd, and put in this degree!
 But truēly I ween'd, as in this case,
 Naught t' have aguilt,¹³ nor done to Love tres-
 pass ;¹⁴

For why ? a truē man, withoutē dread,
 Hath not to partē¹⁵ with a thievē's deed.
 Nor a true lover oughtē me to blame,
 Though that I spoke a false lover some shame.
 They oughtē rather with me for to hold,
 For that I of Cressida wrote or told,
 Or of the Rose, what so mine author meant ;¹⁶
 Algate,¹⁷ God wot, it was mine intent
 To further truth in love, and it cherice,¹⁸
 And to beware from falseness and from vice,
 By such example ; this was my meaning."

And she answer'd ; "Let be thine arguing,
 For Lovē will not counterpleaded be¹⁹
 In right nor wrong, and learnē that of me ;
 Thou hast thy grace, and hold thee right thereto.

¹ A poem entitled "The Lamentation of Mary Magdalene," said to have been "taken out of St Origen," is included in the editions of Chaucer ; but its authenticity, and consequently its identity with the poem here mentioned, are doubted.

² See note 32, page 201.

³ Offend.

⁷ Refuse.

⁹ A paraphrase of the well-known proverb, "His dat qui cito dat."

¹² Give me grace.

¹⁴ Offence.

¹⁶ That is, they ought rather to thank me for giving a faithful translation.

¹⁷ By all ways.

¹⁹ The same prohibition occurs in the Fifteenth Statute of "The Court of Love," page 204.

³ Penalty.

⁴ Quickly.

⁶ Either.

⁸ Delay.

¹¹ Reward.

¹³ Offended.

¹⁵ Hath no share in.

¹⁸ Cherish.

Now will I say what penance thou shalt do
 For thy trespass ;¹⁴ and understand it here :
 Thou shalt, while that thou livest, year by year,
 The mostē partie of thy timē spend
 In making of a glorious Légend
 Of Goodē Women, maidenēs and wives,
 That werē true in loving all their lives ;
 And tall of falsē men that them betray,
 That all their lifē do naught but assay
 How many women they may do a shame ;
 For in your world that is now held a game.²⁰
 And though thou likē not a lover be,²¹
 Speak well of love ; this penance give I thee.
 And to the God of Love I shall so pray,
 That he shall charge his servants, by any way,
 To further thee, and well thy labour quite :²²
 Go now thy way, thy penance is but lite.
 And, when this book ye make, give it the queen
 On my behalf, at Eltham, or at Sheen."

The God of Love gan smile, and then he said :
 "Know'st thou," quoth he, "whether this be
 wife or maid,

Or queen, or countess, or of what degree,
 That hath so little penance given thee,
 That hath deserved sorely for to smart ?
 But pity runneth soon in gentle heart ;²³
 That may'st thou see, she kitheth²⁴ what she is."
 And I answer'd : "Nay, Sir, so have I bliss,
 No more but that I see well she is good."
 "That is a truē talē, by my hood,"
 Quoth Love ; "and that thou knowest well,
 pardie !

If it be so that thou advisē²⁵ thee.
 Hast thou not in a book, li'th²⁶ in thy chest,
 The greatē goodness of the queen Alceste,
 That turned was into a daisy ?
 She that for her husbandē chose to die,
 And eke to go to hell rather than he ;
 And Hercules rescuēd her, pardie !
 And brought her out of hell again to bliss ?²⁷
 And I answer'd again, and saidē ; "Yea,
 Now know I her ; and is this good Alceste,
 The daisy, and mine own heartē's rest ?
 Now feel I well the goodness of this wife,
 That both after her death, and in her life,
 Her greatē bounty²⁷ doubleth her renown.
 Well hath she quit²⁸ me mine affectioun
 That I have to her flow'r the daisy ;
 No wonder is though Jove her stellify,²⁹
 As telleth Agathon,³⁰ for her goodnēss ;
 Her whitē crownē bears of it witness ;
 For all so many virtues haddē she
 As smallē flowrons in her crownē be.

²⁰ Considered a sport.

²¹ Chaucer is always careful to allege his abstinence from the pursuits of gallantry ; he does so prominently in "The Court of Love," "The Assembly of Fowls," and "The House of Fame."

²² Requite.

²³ Into the heart of one nobly born. The same is said of Theseus, in The Knight's Tale, page 34 ; and of Canacé, by the falcon, in The Squire's Tale, page 120.

²⁴ Showeth.

²⁵ Bethink.

²⁶ (That) lies.

²⁷ Virtue.

²⁸ Recompensed.

²⁹ Assign to her a place among the stars ; as he did to Andromeda and Cassiopeia.

³⁰ There was an Athenian dramatist of this name, who might have made the virtues and fortunes of Alcestis his theme ; but the reference is too vague for the author to be identified with any confidence.

In rémembrance of her, and in honoúr,
Cybelé made the daisy, and the flow'r,
Y-crowned all with white, as men may see,
And Mars gave her a crownē red, pardie!
In stead of rubies set among the white."

Therewith this queen wax'd red for shame a lite
When she was praised so in her preséce.
Then saidē Love: "A full great negligence
Was it to thee, that ilkē¹ time thou made
'Hide Absolon thy tresses,' in balláde,
That thou forgot her in thy song to set,
Since that thou art so greatly in her debt,
And knowest well that calendar² is she
To any woman that will lover be:
For she taught all the craft of true loving,
And namēly³ of wifehood the living,
And all the boundēs that she ought to keep:
Thy little wit was thilkē time asleep.
But now I chargē thee, upon thy life,
That in thy Legend thou make⁴ of this wife,
When thou hast other small y-made before;
And fare now well, I chargē thee no more.
But ere I go, thus much I will thee tell,—
Never shall no true lover come in hell.
These other ladies, sitting here a-row,
Be in my ballad, if thou canst them know,

And in thy bookēs all thou shalt them find;
Have them in thy Légend now all in mind;
I mean of them that be in thy knowing.
For here be twenty thousand more sitting
Than that thou knowest, goodē women all,
And true of love, for aught that may befall;
Makē the metres of them as thee lest;
I must go home,—the sunnē draweth west,—
To Paradise, with all this company:
And serve alway the freshē daisy.
At Cleopatra I will that thou begin,
And so forth, and my love so shalt thou win;
For let see now what man, that lover be,
Will do so strong a pain for love as she.
I wot well that thou may'st not all it rhyme,
That suchē lovers didden in their time;
It were too long to readen and to hear;
Sufficē me thou make in this mannere,
That thou rehearse of all their life the great,⁵
After⁶ these old authōrs list for to treat;
For whoso shall so many a story tell,
Say shortly, or he shall too longē dwell."

And with that word my bookēs gan I take,
And right thus on my Legend gan I make.

Thus endeth the Prologue.

CHAUCER'S A. B. C.

CALLED

LA PRIERE DE NOSTRE DAME.⁷

A.

ALMIGHTY and all-merciable⁸ Queen,
To whom all this world fleeth for succour,
To have release of sin, of sorrow, of teen!⁹
Glorious Virgin! of all flowers flow'r,
To thee I flee, confounded in erroúr!
Help and relieve, almighty debonair,¹⁰
Have mercy of my perilous languoúr!
Vanquish'd me hath my cruel adversair.

B.

Bounty¹¹ so fix'd hath in thy heart his tent,
That well I wot thou wilt my succour be;
Thou canst not warnē that¹² with good in-
tent
Asketh thy help, thy heart is ay so free!
Thou art larges¹³ of plein¹⁴ felicity,
Haven and refuge of quiét and rest!
Lo! how that thievēs seven¹⁵ chasē me!
Help, Lady bright, ere that my ship to-brest!¹⁶

¹ That same.

³ Especially.

⁴ Poetise, compose.

⁵ The substance.

⁷ Chaucer's A. B. C.—a prayer to the Virgin, in twenty-three verses, beginning with the letters of the alphabet in their order—is said to have been written "at the request of Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster, as a prayer for her private use, being a woman in her re-

² Guide, example.

⁶ According as.

C.

Comfort is none, but in you, Lady dear!
For lo! my sin and my confusión,
Which ought not in thy presence to appear,
Have ta'en on me a grievous actiún,¹⁷
Of very right and desperation!
And, as by right, they mightē well sustene
That I were worthy my damnatiún,
Ne were it mercy of you, blissful Queen!

D.

Doubt is there none, Queen of misericorde,¹⁸
That thou art cause of grace and mercy here;
God vouchēsaf'd, through thee, with us t'
accord;¹⁹
For, certes, Christē's blissful mother dear!
Were now the bow y-bent, in such mannere
As it was first, of justice and of ire,
The rightful God would of no mercy hear;
But through thee have we grace as we desire.

ligion very devout." It was first printed in Speght's edition of 1597.

⁸ All-merciful.

⁹ Affliction.

¹⁰ Gracious, gentle.

¹¹ Goodness, charity.

¹² Thou canst not refuse (the prayer of him) that.

¹³ Thou art the liberal bestower.

¹⁴ Full.

¹⁵ The seven deadly sins.

¹⁶ Be broken to pieces.

¹⁷ Control.

¹⁸ Compassion.

¹⁹ To be reconciled.

E.

Ever hath my hope of refuge in thee be' ;
 For herebefore full oft in many a wise
 Unto mercy hast thou received me.
 But mercy, Lady ! at the great assize,
 When we shall come before the high Justice !
 So little fruit shall then in me be found,
 That, but¹ thou ere that day correcte me,
 Of very right my work will me confound.

F.

Flying, I flee for succour to thy tent,
 Me for to hide from tempest full of dread ;
 Beseeching you, that ye you not absent,
 Though I be wick'. O help yet at this need !
 All² have I been a beast in wit and deed,
 Yet, Lady ! thou me close in with thy grace ;
 Thine enemy and mine,³—Lady, take heed !—
 Unto my death in point is me to chase.

G.

Gracious Maid and Mother ! which that never
 Wert bitter⁴ nor in earth⁵ nor in sea,
 But full of sweetness and of mercy ever,
 Help, that my Father be not wroth with me !
 Speak thou, for I ne dar⁶ Him not see ;
 So have I done in earth, alas the while !
 That, certes, but if thou my succour be,
 To sink etern He will my ghost exile.

H.

He vouchsaf'd, tell Him, as was His will,
 Become a man, as for our alliance,⁵
 And with His blood He wrote that blissful bill
 Upon the cross, as general acquittance
 To ev'ry penitent in full creance ;
 And therefore, Lady bright ! thou for us pray ;
 Then shalt thou stenten⁶ all⁷ His grievance,
 And make our foe to failen of his prey.

I.

I wot⁸ well thou wilt be our succour,
 Thou art so full of bounty in certain ;
 For, when a soule falleth in erro⁹ur,
 Thy pity go'th, and haleth⁷ him again ;
 Then makest thou his peace with his Sov'reign,
 And bringest him out of the crooked street :
 Whoso thee loveth shall not love in vain,
 That shall he find as he the life shall leta.⁸

K.

Kalendar⁹ illumined⁹ be they
 That in this world be lighted with thy name ;
 And whoso goeth with thee the right way,
 Him shall not dread in soule to be lame ;
 Now, Queen of comfort ! since thou art the
 same
 To whom I seek⁸ for my medicine,

¹ Unless.² Although.³ The Devil.⁴ Mary's name recalls the waters of "Marah" or bitterness (Exod. xv. 23), or the prayer of Naomi in her grief that she might be called not Naomi, but "Mara" (Ruth i. 20). Mary, however, is understood to mean "exalted."⁵ To ally us with God.⁶ Put an end to.⁷ Draweth.⁸ When he leaves life."⁹ That is, brilliant exemplars by which others may shape their daily life.¹⁰ Injure, molest.¹¹ The foe of us all—Satan.

Let not my foe no more my wound entame ;¹⁰
 My heal into thy hand all I resign.

L.

Lady, thy sorrow can I not portray
 Under that cross, nor his grievous penance ;
 But, for your both¹¹'s pain, I you do pray,
 Let not our aller foe¹¹ make his boastance,
 That he hath in his list¹²es, with mischance,
 Convict¹² that ye both have bought so dear ;¹²
 As I said erst, thou ground of all substance !
 Continue on us thy piteous eyen clear.

M.

Moses, that saw the bush of flames red
 Burning, of which then never a stick brenn'd,¹³
 Was sign of thine unwemmed¹⁴ maidenhead.
 Thou art the bush, on which there gan descend
 The Holy Ghost, the which that Moses wend¹⁵
 Had been on fire ; and this was in figure.¹⁶
 Now, Lady ! from the fire us do defend,
 Which that in hell eternally shall dure.

N.

Noble Princ¹⁷ess ! that never haddest peer ;
 Certes if any comfort in us be,
 That cometh of thee, Christ¹⁸'s mother dear !
 We have none other melody nor glee,¹⁷
 Us to rejoice in our adversity ;
 Nor advocate, that will and dare so pray
 For us, and for as little hire as ye,
 That help¹⁸ for an Ave-Mary or tway.

O.

O very light of eyen that be blind !
 O very lust of labour and distress !
 O treasurer of bounty to mankind !
 The whom God chose to mother for humbles !
 From his ancill¹⁹ he mad¹⁹ thee mistr¹⁹ess
 Of heav'n and earth, our bill¹⁹es up to bode ;¹⁹
 This world awaiteth ever on thy goodn¹⁹es ;
 For thou ne failedst never wight at need.

P.

Purpose I have sometime for to enque²⁰re
 Wherefore and why the Holy Ghost thee sought,
 When Gabrielis voice came to thine ear ;
 He not to war²⁰ us such a wonder wrought,
 But for to save us, that sithens us bought :
 Then needeth us no weapon us to save,
 But only, where we did not as we ought,
 Do penitence, and mercy ask and have.

Q.

Queen of comfort, right when I me bethink
 That I aguilt²¹ have both²¹ Him and thee,
 And that my soul is worthy for to sink,
 Alas ! I, caitiff, whither shall I flee ?
 Who shall unto thy Son my mean²² be ?

¹² That he hath entangled in his wiles that (soul) which ye both redeemed at such a cost.¹³ Burned.¹⁴ Unblemished.¹⁵ Weened, supposed.¹⁶ A typical representation. See The Prioress's Tale, page 144.¹⁷ Pleasure.¹⁸ Handmaid. The reference evidently is to Luke i. 38—"Ecce ancilla Domini," the Virgin's humble answer to Gabriel at the Annunciation.¹⁹ To offer up our petitions or prayers.²⁰ To "warray" or afflict.²¹ Offended.²² Medium of approach, intercessor.

Who, but thyself, that art of pity well?¹
Thou hast more ruth on our adversity
Than in this world might any tongue tell!

R.

Redress me, Mother, and eke me chastise!
For certainly my Father's chastising
I darē not abiden in no wise,
So hidēous is his full reckoning.
Mother! of whom our joy began to spring,
Be ye my judge, and eke my soul's leach;²
For ay in you is pity abounding
To each that will of pity you beseech.

S.

Sooth is it that He granteth no pity
Withoutē thee; for God of his goodnēss
Forgiveth none, but it like unto thee;³
He hath thee madē vicar and mistrēss
Of all this world, and ekē governess
Of heaven; and represeth his justice
After⁴ thy will; and therefore in witnēss
He hath thee crowned in so royal wise.

T.

Temple devout! where God chose his wonning,⁵
From which these misbeliev'd deprived be,
To you my soul's penitent I bring;
Receive me, for I can no farther flee.
With thornēs venomous, O Heaven's Queen!
For which the earth accursēd was full yore,
I am so wounded, as ye may well see,
That I am lost almōst, it smart so sore!

V.

Virgin! that art so noble of apparail,⁶
That ledest us into the highē tow'r
Of Paradise, thou me wiss and counsail⁷

How I may have thy grace and thy succour:
All have I been in filth and in erroūr,
Lady! on that country thou me adjourn,⁸
That called is thy bench of freshē flow'r,
There as that mercy ever shall sojourn.

X.

Xpe⁹ thy Son, that in this world alight,
Upon a cross to suffer his passioūn,
And suffer'd eke that Longeus his heart pight,¹⁰
And made his heartē-blood to run adown;
And all this was for my salvatioūn:
And I to him am false and eke unkind,
And yet he wills not my damnatioūn;
This thank I you,¹¹ succour of all mankind!

Y.

Ysaac was figure of His death certāin,
That so farforth his father would obey,
That him ne raughtē¹² nothing to be alain;
Right so thy Son list as a lamb to dey:¹³
Now, Lady full of mercy! I you pray,
Since he his mercy 'sured me so large,
Be ye not scant, for all we sing and say,
That ye be from vengeance alway our targe.¹⁴

Z.

Zachary you calleth the open well¹⁵
That washēd sinful soul out of his guilt;
Therefore this lesson out I will to tell,
That, n'ere¹⁶ thy tender heartē, we were spilt.¹⁷
Now, Lady brightē! since thou canst and wilt,
Be to the seed of Adam merciāble;
Bring us unto that palace that is built
To penitents that be to mercy able!¹⁸

Explicit.

A GOODLY BALLAD OF CHAUCER.¹⁹

MOTHER of nurture, best belov'd of all,
And freshē flow'r, to whom good thrift God send!
Your child, if it lust²⁰ you me so to call,
All be I²¹ unable myself so to pretend,
To your discrecion I recommend
My heart and all, with ev'ry circumstance,
All wholly to be under your governance.

Most desire I, and have and ever shall,
Thingē which might your heartē's ease amend;
Have me excus'd, my power is but small;
Nathless, of right, ye oughtē to commend
My goodē will, which fainē would entend²²

¹ Fountain.

² Unless it please thee.

³ Abode.

⁷ Direct and counsel.

⁹ "Xpe" represents the Greek Xpe, and is a contraction for "Christa."

²⁰ According to tradition, the soldier who struck the Saviour to the heart with his spear was named Longeus, and was blind; but, touching his eyes by chance with the mingled blood and water that flowed down the shaft upon his hands, he was instantly restored to sight.

²¹ For this I am indebted to you.

²² Die.

³ Physician.

⁴ According to.

⁶ Aspect.

⁸ Take me to that place.

To do you service; for my suffisance²³
Is wholly to be under your governance.

Micux un in heart which never shall apall,²⁴
Ay fresh and new, and right glad to dispend
My time in your service, what so befall,
Beseeching your excellēce to defend
My simpleness, if ignorance offend
In any wise; since that mine affiānce
Is wholly to be under your governance.

Daisy of light, very ground of comfort,
The sunnē's daughter ye hight, as I read;
For when he west'reth, farewell your disport!
By your nature alone, right for pure dread

¹⁵ "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. xiii. 1).

¹⁶ Were it not for.

¹⁷ Destroyed, undone.

¹⁸ Fit to receive mercy.

¹⁹ This elegant little poem is believed to have been addressed to Margaret, Countess of Pembroke, in whose name Chaucer found one of those opportunities of praising the daisy he never lost.

²⁰ Please.

²¹ Although I be.

²² Attend, strive.

²³ Contentment.

²⁴ Better one who in heart shall never pall—whose love will never weary.

T

Of the rude night, that with his boistous weed¹
Of darkness shadoweth our hemisphere,
Then closē ye, my lifē's lady dear!

Dawneth the day unto his kind resort,
And Phoebus your father, with his streamēs red,
Adorns the morrow, cōsuming the sort²
Of misty cloudēs, that would overlade
True humble heartēs with their mistihead.³
New comfort adaws,⁴ when your eyen clear
Disclose and spread, my lifē's lady dear.

Je voudrais—but the greatē God disposeth,
And maketh casual, by his Providence,
Such thing as mannē's frailē wit purpōsēth,
All for the best, if that your consciēce
Not grudge it, but in humble patiēce
It receive; for God saith, withoutē fable,
A faithful heart ever is acceptāble.

Cautelēs⁵ whose useth gladly, gloseth;⁶
To eschew such it is right high prudēce;
What ye said onēs minē heart opposeth,
That my writing japēs⁷ in your absēce
Pleased you much better than my presēce:
Yet can I more; ye be not excusāble;
A faithful heart is ever acceptāble.

Quaketh my pen; my spirit supposeth
That in my writing ye will find offence;
Mine heartē welketh⁸ thus; anon it riseth;
Now hot, now cold, and after in fervēce;
That is amiss, is caus'd of negligence,
And not of malice; therefore be merciāble;
A faithful heart is ever acceptāble.

L'Envoy.

Forthē, complaint! forth, lacking eloquence;
Forth little letter, of enditing lame!
I have besought my lady's sapiēce
On thy behalfē, to accept in game
Thine inability; do thou the same.
Abide! have morē yet! *Je serve Joyesse!*⁹
Now forth, I close thee in holy Venus' name!
Thee shall uncloose my heartē's governess.

A BALLAD SENT TO KING RICHARD.

SOMETIME this world was so steadfāst and stable,
That man's word was held obligatiōn;
And now it is so false and deceivāble,¹⁰
That word and work, as in conclusiōn,
Be nothing one; for turned up so down
Is all this world, through meed¹¹ and wilfulness,
That all is lost for lack of steadfastness.
What makes this world to be so variāble,
But lust¹² that folk have in dissensiōn?

¹ Rude, rough, garment.

² Crowd.

³ Dimness, mistiness.

⁴ New comfort dawns or awakens (in my breast).

⁵ Cautious or wary speeches.

⁶ Deceiveth.

⁷ Jests, coarse stories.

⁸ Withers, faints.

⁹ I serve Joy.

¹⁰ Deceitful.

¹¹ Bribery.

¹² Pleasure.

¹³ Fit for nothing.

¹⁴ Unless.

¹⁵ Fraud, trick.

¹⁶ Blinded.

¹⁷ A subject of reproach.

¹⁸ That is, to be done.

¹⁹ Kingdom.

²⁰ Tyrwhitt, founding on the reference to the Wife of Bath, places this among Chaucer's latest compositions;

For now-a-days a man is held unable¹³
But if¹⁴ he can, by some collusion,¹⁵
Do his neighbour wrong or oppressiōn.
What causeth this but wilful wretchedness,
That all is lost for lack of steadfastness?
Truth is put down, reason is holden fable;
Virtue hath now no dominatiōn;
Pity exil'd, no wight is merciāble;
Through covetise is blent¹⁶ discretiōn;
The worldē hath made permutatiōn
From right to wrong, from truth to fickleness,
That all is lost for lack of steadfastness.

L'Envoy.

O Prince! desirē to be honourable;
Cherish thy folk, and hate extortiōn;
Suffer nothing that may be reprobable¹⁷
To thine estate, done¹⁸ in thy regiōn;¹⁹
Show forth the sword of castigatiōn;
Dread God, do law, love thorough worthiness,
And wed thy folk again to steadfastness!

L'ENVOY OF CHAUCER TO BUKTON.²⁰

MY Master Bukton, when of Christ our King
Was asked, What is truth or soothfastness?
He not a word answer'd to that asking,
As who saith, no man is all true, I guess;
And therefore, though I hightē²¹ to express
The sorrow and woe that is in marriage,
I dare not write of it no wickedness,
Lest I myself fall eft in such dotage.²²

I will not say how that it is the chain
Of Satanas, on which he gnaweth ever;
But I dare say, were he out of his pain,
As by his will he would be bounden never.
But thilkē²³ doited fool that eft had lever
Y-chained be, than out of prison creep,
God let him never from his woe dissever,
Nor no man him bewailē though he weep!

But yet, lest thou do worsē, take a wife;
Bet is to wed than burn in worsē wise;²⁴
But thou shalt have sorrow on thy flesh thy life,²⁵
And be thy wifē's thrall, as say these wise.
And if that Holy Writ may not suffice,
Experience shall thee teachē, so may hap,
That thee were lever to be taken in Frise,²⁶
Than eft²⁷ to fall of wedding in the trap.

This little writ, proverbē, or figure,
I sendē you; take keep²⁸ of it, I read!
"Unwise is he that can no weal endure;
If thou be sicker,²⁹ put thee not in dread."³⁰
The Wife of Bath I pray you that you read,

and states that one Peter de Bukton held the office of king's escheator for Yorkshire in 1397. In some of the old editions, the verses were made the Envoy to the Book of the Duchess Blanche—in very bad taste, when we consider that the object of that poem was to console John of Gaunt under the loss of his wife.

²¹ Promised.

²² Fall again into such folly.

²³ That.

²⁴ See 1 Cor. vii. 9.

²⁵ All thy life.

²⁶ Better to be taken prisoner in Friesland—where probably some conflict was raging at the time.

²⁷ Again.

²⁸ Heed.

²⁹ In security.

³⁰ Doubt, danger.

Of this mattère which that we have on hand.
God grantē you your life freely to lead
In freedom, for full hard is to be bond.

A BALLAD OF GENTLENESS.

THE firstē stock-father of gentleness,¹
What man desireth gentle for to be,
Must follow his trace, and all his wittēs dress,²
Virtue to love, and vices for to flee;
For unto virtue longeth dignity,
And not the réverse, safely dare I deem,
All wear he mitre, crown, or diademe.

This firstē stock was full of righteousness,
True of his word, sober, pious, and free,
Clean of his ghost,³ and loved business,
Against the vice of sloth, in honesty;
And, but his heir love virtue as did he,
He is not gentle, though he richē seem,
All wear he mitre, crown, or diademe.

Vicē may well be heir to old richness,
But there may no man, as men may well see,
Bequeath his heir his virtuous nobless;
That is appropriēd⁴ to no degree,
But to the first Father in majesty,
Which makes his heirē him that doth him
queme,⁵
All wear he mitre, crown, or diademe.

THE COMPLAINT OF CHAUCER TO HIS PURSE.

To you, my purse, and to none other wight,
Complain I, for ye be my lady dear!
I am sorry now that ye be so light,
For certes ye now make me heavy cheer;
Me were as lief be laid upon my bier.
For which unto your mercy thus I cry,
Be heavy again, or ellēs must I die!

Now vouchēsafe this day, ere it be night,
That I of you the blissful sound may hear,
Or see your colour like the sunnē bright,
That of yellōwness haddē never peer.
Ye be my life! Ye be my heartē's steer!⁶
Queen of comfort and of good company!
Be heavy again, or ellēs must I die!

Now, purse! that art to me my lifē's light
And savour, as down in this worldē here,
Out of this townē help me through your might,
Since that you will not be my treasurére;
For I am shave as nigh as any frere.⁷
But now I pray unto your courtesý,
Be heavy again, or ellēs must I die!

¹ Christ.

² Pure of spirit.

³ Please.

⁴ "I am as bare of coin as a friar's tonsure of hair."

⁵ See page 396.

⁶ Said to have been composed by Chaucer "upon his deathbed, lying in anguish."

⁷ Treasure.

⁸ Apply.

⁹ Specially reserved.

¹⁰ Rudder.

Chaucer's Envoy to the King.

O conqueror of Brutē's Albion,⁸
Which by lineage and free electiōn
Be very king, this song to you I send;
And ye which may all minē harm amend,
Have mind upon my supplicatiōn!

GOOD COUNSEL OF CHAUCER.⁹

FLEE from the press, and dwell with soothfast-
ness;

Sufficē thee thy good, though it be small;
For hoard¹⁰ hath hate, and climbing tickleness,¹¹
Press hath envý, and weal is blent¹² o'er all,
Savour¹³ no more than thee behovē shall;
Read¹⁴ well thyself, that other folk canst read;
And truth thee shall deliver, it is no dread.¹⁵

Painē thee not each crooked to redress,
In trust of her that turneth as a ball;¹⁶
Great rest standeth in little business:
Beware also to spurn against a nail;¹⁷
Strive not as doth a crockē¹⁸ with a wall;
Deemē¹⁹ thyself that deemest others' deed,
And truth thee shall deliver, it is no dread.

What thee is sent, receive in buxomness;²⁰
The wrestling of this world asketh a fall;
Here is no home, here is but wilderness.
Forth, pilgrim! forthē, beast, out of thy stall!
Look up on high, and thank thy God of all!
Weivē thy lust,²¹ and let thy ghost²² thee lead,
And truth thee shall deliver, it is no dread.

PROVERBS OF CHAUCER.

WHAT should these clothes thus manifold,
Lo! this hot summer's day?
After great heatē cometh cold;
No man cast his pilche²³ away.
Of all this world the large compás
Will not in mine arms twain;
Who so muchē will embrace,
Little thereof he shall distrain.²⁴

The world so wide, the air so remuable,²⁵
The silly man so little of stature;
The green of ground and clothing so mutable,
The fire so hot and subtile of nature;
The water never in one²⁶—what créature
That made is of these fourē²⁷ thus flitting,
May steadfast be, as here, in his living?

The more I go, the farther I am behind;
The farther behind, the nearer my war's end;

¹⁵ Doubt.

¹⁶ Fortune.

¹⁷ To kick against a nail, "against the pricks."

¹⁸ An earthen pot.

¹⁹ Judge.

²⁰ Submission.

²¹ Forsake thy inclinations.

²² Spirit.

²³ Pelisse, furred cloak.

²⁴ Grasp.

²⁵ Unstable.

²⁶ Never the same.

²⁷ That is, the four elements, of which man was believed to be composed.

The more I seek, the worse can I find;
 The lighter leave, the lother for to wend;¹
 The better I live, the more out of mind;
 Is this fortune, n'ot I, or infortune;²
 Though I go loose, tied am I with a loigne.³

VIRELAY.

ALONE walking,
 In thought plaining,
 And sore sighing,
 All desolate,
 Me rememb'ring
 Of my living;
 My death wishing
 Both early and late.

Infortunate
 Is so my fate,
 That, wot ye what?
 Out of mesure
 My life I hate;
 Thus desperate,
 In such poor estate,
 Do I endure.

Of other cure
 Am I not sure;
 Thus to endure
 Is hard, certain;
 Such is my ure,⁴
 I you ensure;
 What creature
 May have more pain?

My truth so plain
 Is taken in vain,
 And great disdain
 In remembrance;
 Yet I full fain
 Would me complain,
 Me to abstain
 From this penance.

But, in substance,
 None alleggiance⁵
 Of my grievance
 Can I not find;
 Right so my chance,
 With displeasance,
 Doth me advance;
 And thus an end.

¹ The more easy (through age) for me to depart, the less willing I am to go.

² I know not whether this is fortune or misfortune.

³ With a line or tether—by marriage.

⁴ My "heur," or destiny; the same word that enters into "bonheur" and "malheur."

⁵ I care not a bean for him.

⁵ Alleviation.

"SINCE I FROM LOVE."

SINCE I from Love escaped am so fat,
 I ne'er think to be in his prison ta'en;
 Since I am free, I count him not a bean.⁶

He may answer, and saye this and that;
 I do no force,⁷ I speak right as I mean;
 Since I from Love escaped am so fat.

Love hath my name struck out of hisalat,⁸
 And he is struck out of my bookes clean,
 For ever more; there is none other mean;
 Since I from Love escaped am so fat.

CHAUCER'S WORDS TO HIS SCRIVENER.

ADAM Scrivener, if ever it thee befall
 Boece or Troilus⁹ for to write anew,
 Under thy long looks thou may'st have the
 scall¹⁰

But after my making¹¹ thou write more true!
 So oft a day I must thy work renew,
 It to correct, and eke to rub and scrape;
 And all is through thy negligence and rape.¹²

CHAUCER'S PROPHECY.

WHEN priestes failen in their saws,¹³
 And lordes turne Godde's laws
 Against the right;
 And lechery is holden as privy solace,¹⁴
 And robbery as free purchace,¹⁵
 Beware then of ill!
 Then shall the Land of Albion
 Turne to confusion,
 As sometime it befell.

*Ora pro Anglia Sancta Maria, quod Thomas
 Cantuaria.*

Sweet Jesus, heaven's King,
 Fair and best of all thing,
 You bring us out of this mourning,
 To come to thee at our ending!

⁷ Make no matter.

⁸ Slate, list.

⁹ That is, Chaucer's translation of Boethius, or his "Troilus and Cressida."

¹⁰ Scab.

¹¹ According to my composing.

¹² Haste.

¹³ Come short of their professions.

¹⁴ Secret delight.

¹⁵ Legitimate gain.

[Handwritten signature]

THE FAERIE QUEEN;

AND OTHER POEMS

OF

EDMUND SPENSER.

LIFE OF EDMUND SPENSER.

THOSE familiar with London and London life in the second half of the nineteenth century, will more or less consciously take a Carlylean view of its intellectually productive capability, and affirm that no poet could be born there. Yet it may be questioned whether, in times past, London did not hold to the rest of these Islands, not numerically alone, but in activity and intensity of material life, a much more important relation than it does at present. In many senses, London was far more conspicuously the centre of the kingdom at a time when everything circulated to it, and little or nothing from it, than in these days, when the inward and the outward currents fairly compete with each other, and the facilities of inter-communication, the growth of independent political life, have destroyed the commercial and intellectual monopoly which in the older days the metropolis enjoyed. Certain it is, nevertheless, that London produced three of England's greatest Poets; and if the fourth, Shakespeare, did not draw his first or his last breath in the capital, at least he spent there the most important part of his life, and made the little fortune on which he quietly waited for death at Stratford-on-Avon. Chaucer, Spenser, and Milton, however, indubitably were born in London; the first and the last of that splendid trio were Londoners most of their days—men of the Court, men of the council, men at head-quarters. Spenser's future fate led him afield into lonely and rough places; but London claims the honour of giving him birth. We have his own word for the fact; for in a poem entitled "Prothalamion," written to celebrate "the double marriage of the two honourable and virtuous Ladies, the Lady Elizabeth and the Lady Katherine Somerset, daughters to the right honourable the Earl of Worcester," Spenser says—describing the progress of the two Swans who represent the brides, with their attendant train of nymphs—

" At length they all to merry London came,
To merry London, my most kindly nurse,
That to me gave this life's first native source,
Though from another place I take my name,
A house of ancient fame :"

Some now wholly unrecognisable or demolished house "in East Smithfield, by the Tower," saw the poet ushered into this world, towards the close of the year 1552. (See note 1, page 618.) The general belief is, that his parents were in indifferent circumstances; but little doubt is entertained regarding the "respectability," if not even the nobility, of their original condition. Repeatedly, in dedications prefixed to his minor poems, Spenser claims kindred with the Spencers of Althorpe, in Northamptonshire—from whom the noble houses of Spencer and Marlborough took their rise. In 1590, he dedicates "Muiopotmos" to Lady Carey, the second daughter of Sir John Spencer; next year, he dedicates "The Tears of the Muses"

to Lady Strange, Sir John's sixth daughter, afterwards Countess of Derby ; and, in both cases, the poet makes carefully distinct reference to his relationship—a claim which does not seem to have been repudiated, and which, in the brilliant but too brief days of his stay in London as the friend of Sidney and Leicester, we may reasonably suppose to have been acknowledged with satisfaction and even pride.

From whatever parentage he sprang, then, or whatever were the worldly circumstances of his immediate ancestors about the time of his birth, Spenser appears to have come of gentle lineage. Even in absence of any direct or collateral testimonies to that effect, we might almost be disposed to believe it on the strength of a single stanza in "The Faerie Queen"—the first in the fourth canto of the second book (page 375)—where the poet asserts for "gentle blood" a peculiar possession of the "skill to ride." But the branch of the Spenser family with which Edmund was immediately connected, was not that to whose daughters he inscribed his dedications, but that of the Spensers, or Le Spensers, of Hurstwood, near Burnley, in eastern Lancashire. A small domain, called "the Spensers," exists to this day, in the Forest of Pendle, about three miles north of Hurstwood ; and it has been noticed that, in the churchyards and parish registers of the district around "the Spensers," the not very usual Christian names of Edmund and Laurence abound—those being familiar names in the pedigree of the poet's descendants. Another evidence that the Spensers of Spensers were the poet's relations—though the circumstances of his birth show that he came of a distinct and perhaps less prosperous offshoot of the family—is furnished by what we may infer to have been his prolonged residence in the north country during his youth. Spenser speaks of London rather as one who had chanced to be born there, than as one whose youthful memory and cast of thought had been wholly moulded by the life of the city : while the form and the topics of his earlier poems attest a long experience of rural affairs, and intimate enjoyment of rural existence. But we can merely infer that the poet's youth was thus spent ; for we have no authentic trace of him between the date of his birth and the 20th of May, 1569, when he was entered a sizar of Pembroke Hall, in Cambridge University—the position which he took as a student indicating that affluence had not yet come to his immediate relatives. His college career was not so eminently distinguished that tradition has preserved his memory as among the brilliant *alumni* of his college ; and his works, while they display a general acquaintance with the philosophies of Lucretius and Plato, do not show remarkable traces of extended or rigidly accurate scholarship. Whether or not we should connect any shortcomings in the mere routine of his studies with the evidence that there was a good deal of "friction" between Spenser and the authorities of his own college, it is tolerably plain that the poet quitted his Alma Mater with something like the same grudge which Swift bore against Dublin University. But although, in correspondence with his intimates, Spenser seems to have freely expressed himself regarding his "old controller," or tutor, Dr. Perne, and to have relished the sarcasms of his friends on the same theme, no trace of such small animosities appears in his poems. True it is that he makes no grateful or celebrative mention of Pembroke Hall ; but in "The Faerie Queen" (canto xi., book iv., page 477), when enumerating the Ouse among the rivers that attend the wedding of the Thames and the Medway, he says that the stream—

"Doth by Huntingdon and Cambridge flit ;
My mother Cambridge, whom as with a crown
He doth adorn, and is adorn'd of it
With many a gentle Muse and many a learned wit."

Whatever may have been the cause of his disagreement with the Dons—whether his

own remissness, his independence, or their exacting and unfair behaviour—Spenser passed honourably through the academic grades. On January 16th, 1572-3, he took the degree of Bachelor of Arts; on June 26th, 1576, that of Master of Arts; and he quitted Cambridge immediately, to go to the north country—whither, if, as we suppose, he was merely returning to the scenes of his boyhood, the memory of “Rosalind” may have powerfully attracted him.

Between 1576 and 1578, we know little more of Spenser’s life than what can be gathered by inference from “The Shepherd’s Calendar.” We learn there, that he resided for a season in the North; that his University friend, Gabriel Harvey, subsequently a Fellow of Trinity Hall, Cambridge (who is the “Hobbinol” of the “Calendar” and of “Colin Clout”), besought him to quit the bleak and shelterless hills, and come down to the warmer and softer South; and that Spenser lingered for a while in the North, through his passion for “Rosalind”—hoping against hope, perchance, that after all the fickle fair would relent, and prefer his suit to that of the favoured “Menalcas.” Many and ingenious have been the endeavours made to raise the veil that hides the identity of Spenser’s early love. Edmund Kirke, another Cambridge friend of the poet’s—who, under his initials E. K., introduced and annotated “The Shepherd’s Calendar”—set wits hopefully to work by his remark that perhaps the feigned name of “Rosalind,” “being well ordered, will bowray the very name of his love and mistress, whom by that name he coloureth.” Though the parallel cases of such pedantic counterfeiting which E. K. enumerates do not exactly point to an anagrammatic solution, that is the favourite mode in which biographers of Spenser have sought to “well order” the name of “Rosalind.” Hence we have her made a lady of Kent, Rose Lynde; again a lady of Kent, Eliza Horden, the aspirate being omitted: but unfortunately those conjectures are based merely on documentary evidence that in the time of Henry VI. there lived gentlemen of Kent named Horden and Linde. Better authenticated and more consistent with probability is the theory that “Rosalinde” was Rose Daniel, sister of Samuel Daniel the poet, a contemporary and friend of Spenser: and the theory, so plausible from the anagrammatic point of view which E. K. seems to favour, is buttressed by the fact that Rose Daniel actually married a man who might be most significantly described as “Menalcas”—the poet’s fictitious name for the triumphant swain. Her husband, John Florio, a poet and litterateur of some pretensions, was of eccentric and bombastic humour; he would fairly have stood for the double picture of the carl and fool that, in the seventh canto of the sixth book of “The Faerie Queen,” lead along the once proud but now humiliated “Mirabella”—who there represents Spenser’s first love; and he was in the constant habit of signing himself “Resolute John Florio”—“Menalcas,” compounded from two Greek words, signifying “resolute.” It is sufficient to state in outline these various theories; and to remark, that however well they may harmonise within themselves, or with other passages in Spenser’s poetry, they do not agree with the obvious fact that “The Widow’s Daughter of the Glen” was a northern lady—probably a near neighbour of the Spensers of Spensers. Of Rosalind’s person and character extremely little is known. It would be idle to doubt her beauty; the scanty descriptions which are on record represent her as accomplished and witty—familiar with Petrarch in his own tongue, and not afraid to bandy classical jests with the young scholar and poet; while the supposition that she was merely some peasant’s daughter is discountenanced by the facts which have just been stated, and also by the consideration that not only was the attribution of lowly estate a *façon de parler* in pastoral poetry not peculiar to Spenser, but the poet was obviously proud of his own high connections, and may have taken a more moderate view of good birth than his own actual worldly circumstances seem to have warranted.

In 1578—solicited by his friend Harvey to come to the South, and also, as E. K. hints, desirous to obtain, by solicitation at Court, some preferment or office that might help his slender resources—Spenser quitted Lancashire for London. There can be no doubt that he did not come up quite weaponless to the battle of fortune in the capital. Long before, he had made some slight poetical essays. John Van der Noodt, a Dutch Protestant who had taken refuge in England for hatred of Popery not less than love of life, published in 1569—the year in which Spenser entered at Pembroke Hall—a volume entitled “A Theatre wherein be represented as well the Miseries and Calamities that follow the Voluptuous Worldlings, as also the great Joys and Pleasures which the Faithful do enjoy.” Prefixed to this volume were twenty-one “Epigrams” and Sonnets, by an anonymous hand; and these pieces are, either in substance or in form, identical with a number of the Sonnets, illustrating the vanity of human things, that were published with Spenser’s name more than a score of years afterwards, under the titles of “Visions of the World’s Vanity,” “The Visions of Petrarch,” and “The Visions of Bellay.” It is probable also, that “Prosopopoia”—perhaps Spenser’s most spirited poem, certainly that in which he best caught the spirit of his great model, Chaucer—was written, at least in part, during his residence at Cambridge. But it is beyond question that he brought “The Shepherd’s Calendar” to London with him, ready or nearly ready for the press; and at the end of 1579 it was published, in small quarto, with an inscription “To the noble and virtuous gentleman, most worthy of all titles, both of learning and chivalry, Master Philip Sidney.” To “him that is the President of Nobless and of Chivalry”—as Spenser, writing under the pseudonym of “Immerito,” styles Sidney in the lines prefixed to the “Calendar”—the author had been introduced by Gabriel Harvey. A close friendship appears to have sprung up between the two young poets—as was, in truth, a most natural consequence of their introduction; Sidney made the newcomer acquainted with his uncle, the famous Earl of Leicester; and for two years Spenser moved amid the witty and splendid courtier-throng that surrounded the throne of the Maiden Queen. The friend of Sidney and the protégé of Leicester, whatever his private fortunes, might well lay claim to kinship with the proud Spencers of Althorpe; and it is probable that the poet made the most of every such opportunity to advance his interests and better his revenues. Meantime, while he paid unadulating court to the great, he did not neglect the Muses. The impression made upon his imaginative and generous mind by the brilliancy, the elegance, the high spirit, and chivalrous daring, which marked the principal figures at the Court of Elizabeth, impelled him to a loftier effort than the pathetic love-plaints of the “Calendar,” or the homely satire of “Mother Hubberd.” The aspirations after a nobler theme and a bolder song may be traced in the later portions of the “Calendar”—especially in the October Eclogue; and during Spenser’s two years in town, the scheme of “The Faerie Queen” was doubtless drawn up, and part of the poem composed. It does not say much for the penetration of Gabriel Harvey, or the influence which his veneration for the antique might have exerted if Spenser had been a poet of weaker will, to find that “The Faerie Queen” positively horrified him. “Nine comedies, whereunto, in imitation of Herodotus,” Spenser had given the names of the nine Muses, pleased the intellectually superstitious pedant better than the “Elvish Queen”—in which, with characteristic faith in his own powers and merits, Spenser had expressed a purpose to emulate and a hope to surpass Ariosto in his *Orlando Furioso*. “If so be,” says Harvey, writing in April 1580; “if so be the Faery Queen be fairer in your eye than the Nine Muses, and Hobgoblin run away with the garland from Apollo; mark what I say—and yet I will not say that [what] I thought; but there is an end for this once, and fare you well, till God or some

good angel put you in a better mind." Providence did not interfere with the impulse of the poet ; the nine Comedies christened after the Muses are now preserved from oblivion only in the futile praise of Harvey ; and the scholar's attempts to induce Spenser to adopt a metrical system founded on that of the ancients, met with no more attention than a half-amused and half-courteous experimentation, in letters between the two friends, which reminds us of similar exercises not long ago put forth by Mr Tennyson. Besides the nine comedies, other poems are mentioned in correspondence about this time, of which no memorial remains, at least in their original form. Such are "Dreams," "Legends," the "Court of Cupid," "The English Poet," "The Dying Pelican," "Stemmata Dudleiana," "Slumber," and "Epithalamium Thamesis." "Stemmata Dudleiana" probably survives in "The Ruins of Time ;" "Slumber" and "Dreams" in the "Visions" formerly mentioned ; the "Court of Cupid" and "Epithalamium Thamesis" in "The Faerie Queen" (cantos x. and xi. of book iv.) "The English Poet" and "The Dying Pelican" are lost.

In August 1580 Spenser—who seems to have for some time acted as secretary to the Earl of Leicester—attended Arthur Lord Grey of Wilton, who had been appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland, in the capacity of private secretary. Raleigh, who had not long returned from his voyage to Newfoundland with Sir Humphrey Gilbert, his half-brother, was serving in the English forces ; and in all probability the friendship now began which was destined to bear fruit in the poet's introduction to Queen Elizabeth. Of this, however, we have no evidence : what we do know is, that in March 1581 Spenser was appointed to the office of Clerk of Degrees and Recognizances in the Irish Court of Chancery—an office which he held until, in 1588, he was made Clerk to the Council of Munster. Before the end of 1581, also, he received a Crown grant of a lease of the manor, castle, and abbey of Enniscorthy, in Wexford, at a rent of £300, on the condition of his keeping the buildings in repair. Though Enniscorthy was a pleasant and lovely place, Spenser did not hold it long ; in December 1581, he sold his interest to one Richard Synot, from whom it passed into the hands of Sir H. Wallop, the ancestor of the present Portsmouth family. We have sufficient proof of the high esteem in which the poet held the chivalrous and high-minded but somewhat absolute Deputy whom he served, in the character of Grey drawn under the name of Sir Artegall in the fifth book of "The Faerie Queen ;" and in the recommendatory Sonnet prefixed to that Poem, where Spenser addresses Grey as the pillar of his life and patron of his Muse's pupilage. When Grey was recalled, in 1582, Spenser is generally stated to have returned with him ; but there are reasons for believing that the poet remained at his post in Dublin, and devoted his labour to "The Faerie Queen." He distinctly describes that poem, in his introductory Sonnet addressed to the Earl of Ormond (page 308), as "the wild fruit which salvage soil hath bred," and in the Sonnet to Grey as "rude rhymes, the which a rustic Muse did weave in salvage soil, far from Parnassus Mount." Moreover, the duties of his Chancery office required him to reside in Ireland ; there are no well-authenticated notices of his presence in England between 1582 and 1590—a thing incomprehensible if he had been within easy reach of Harvey's letters, Sidney's friendship, or Leicester's good offices ; there is evidence, in a work by his friend Lodowick Briskett, that Spenser lived at or near Dublin, in high repute for literary judgment, for scholarship, and genius, during those years in which direct authentic record loses sight of him ; while his intimate knowledge of the condition of Ireland, displayed in his sole prose work, testifies to far more than that cursory observation which the leisure of two years' official life could afford. Another token that his Chancery duties detained him in Dublin, is furnished by a Sonnet addressed to Gabriel Harvey, dated at that city on the 18th of July 1586 ; while it is not easy

to understand why, on the 27th of June in the same year, the Queen should have made him a grant of 3028 acres of land in the county of Cork, unless it was in reward of services in Ireland. We may therefore conceive Spenser going through the daily routine of Chancery work at Dublin—as Chaucer performed the dull duties of his post as Controller of Customs at London—until, in 1586, he was banished from such society as the Irish chief city afforded, to the lovely but lonely vicinity of Kilcolman.

The estate consisted of lands forfeit by the Earl of Desmond. The ancient castle that stood upon it—now a mere mound of ruins—had been a residence of the old Earls. It was romantically situated, two miles from Doneraile, on the northern side of a lake fed by the waters of the Awbeg, which the poet fancifully named the Mulla; and all around rose mountain ranges, at a distance sufficient to permit the boast, that from the battlements half the breadth of Ireland could be seen. The extensive plain in which Spenser's mansion stood is bounded on the north by what the poet styled the Mountains of Mole,—the Ballyhoura Hills, or, more properly, the range of Galty More, in which sprang the Mulla, the Bregog, the Molanna (or Brackbawn), and the Funcheon, all named in his "*Faerie Queen*" or "*Colin Clout*:" the eastern horizon was shut in by the distant mountains of Waterford; the western by the mountains of Kerry; the southern by the mountains of Nagle—all covered, in those days, with dense natural timber, for which the pilgrim to Spenser's ruined shrine now looks around in vain. It is supposed that the grant of this picturesque domain was procured for the poet through the good offices of Sidney—whose enforced retirement from the gay and brave Court, beyond the atmosphere of which men of Raleigh's stamp could scarcely breathe, had been solaced by those imaginations of pastoral simplicity and happiness, far from the whirling city and the intriguing palace, which the young warrior-poet indulged in his romance of "*Arcadia*." Perhaps Spenser coveted the retirement of Kilcolman; the place, if it came to him through the influence of Sidney, must have been rendered peculiarly dear when the hero's death in Holland, towards the close of 1586, made it seem, as it were, the last bequest of his friendship and admiration. The condition of the grant is said to have made residence on the estate obligatory; but it may be questioned whether Spenser hastened to take possession—for it was not until 1588 that, quitting his Chancery post at Dublin, he became Clerk to the Council of Munster; and it may be supposed, that, if he had taken earlier possession of his castle, he must have resigned his Chancery appointment sooner. We know, however, that in the later half of 1589 Sir Walter Raleigh, driven from Court to his Irish estates and duties by the prevalence of the Essex influence, found Spenser at Kilcolman, with three books of his "*Faerie Queen*" ready for the press. Spenser himself, in "*Colin Clout's Come Home Again*," describes the arrival of the "*Shepherd of the Ocean*"—so he terms Raleigh—and his voyage to England at the request and in the company of his illustrious visitor. It is easy to fancy the pleasures which these two high-souled and accomplished men—alike instinct with the tender magnanimity, the chivalrous ardour, of the period—found in each other's society; and the hope of favour and fame with which Spenser set out anew for Court—invited by the foremost soldier and most brilliant courtier of the time, and bearing with him a work of which the author measured the worth and the renown not less liberally than any of this generation.

Raleigh was as good as his word to Spenser; he introduced the poet to the Queen, who was to find in him her most brilliant and enduring eulogist; and—rather tardily, it must be admitted—in the year after the poem was printed, her Majesty bestowed on Spenser a pension of £50 per annum. On the 1st of December 1589, "*The Faerie Queen*" first made her mark on the books of the Stationers'

Company ; early in 1590, the First, Second, and Third Books were published, in a small quarto, by Ponsonby. They were dedicated "To the most (high) mighty, and magnificent Empress (renowned for piety, virtue, and all gracious Government), ELIZABETH, by the grace of God, Queen of England, France, and Ireland (and of Virginia), Defender of the Faith, &c., her most humble servant, Edmund Spenser (doth, in all humility, dedicate, present, and consecrate these his labours, to live with the eternity of her fame)." The dedication of 1590—amplified, when the three books were reprinted six years afterwards, by the words here placed within brackets—was accompanied by a letter to Raleigh, serving as introduction and preliminary explanation to the whole poem ; and, besides some commendatory sonnets by friends, there were also seventeen sonnets addressed by the author to as many illustrious persons of the Court, &c. Great was the marvel and delight of all who read the new poet ; his performance had so far transcended even the promise of "The Shepherd's Calendar," that "The Faerie Queen" was hailed as a new revelation—"as if," says one, "another moon, as quiet and as lustrous as Cynthia, had come up the sky." Neither space nor the scope of this brief notice permits anything like a critical consideration of Spenser's great allegorical poem. It has many faults, of unreality, of redundancy, confusion, and inequality ; but its faults, where they do not actually create, are nobly redeemed by its beauties. In the main, the allegory, never very rigidly maintained as a whole, is easy to be penetrated ; the House of Holiness in the first book, for example, and the House of Alma in the second, are as charming and simple as the Interpreter's House in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," or the City of Mansoul in his "Holy War ;" while, even where the reader may be at any loss to discover the poet's meaning, or where the poet means nothing in particular save to carry forward the story that lies on the surface, the flow, the roll, the melody of the verse reconcile him to everything. Reading "The Faerie Queen," indeed, is like drifting at the will of that ocean to a voyage on which the author repeatedly compares the course of his work. We are at the mercy of a magnificent caprice. Now all is sunlit calm, like the life of Calidore among the shepherds, or of the Squire in the favour of Belphebe. Now night falls, and the waters leap, and clash, and moan in sorrow, with Una's woe for her captive knight, or Timias' lamentation over Belphebe's sudden wrath, or Britomart's anguish for her degraded if not faithless Artegall. Now the waves move in cadence under the returning sun, and the golden clouds attend their march in silent but gorgeous procession, as when we follow the Masque of Cupid, or trace the steps of Scudamour in the Temple of Love, or watch the trooping river-gods that come to the wedding of Thames and Medway, or the stately advance of the Seasons and the Months to the audience of Nature upon Arlo Hill. We have tempests and glassy tranquillity, gloom and glancing brightness, the majesty, the cruelty, the gentleness of the sea, all by turns, gliding from one to the opposite phase with the natural ease and swiftness of relentless purpose and resistless might ; while over all, and through all, we recognise that we are in the grasp of a superhuman spirit, to which the whole material world, and all the elements of man's nature, are but playthings at the will of its fancy. Power, Nobility, and Beauty, inseparably wedded like the Graces—such is "The Faerie Queen," imperfect as it is : for is not every part of a matchless statue instinct with the loveliness and majesty of the whole ?

Such was the fame which the publication of his *magnum opus* won for Spenser, that his printer made haste to collect what works of the poet were accessible in the hands of his friends, or otherwise "loosely scattered abroad ;" and in 1591, when Spenser, having been endowed with his pension, was back at Kilcolman, Ponsonby put forth a volume of "Complaints ; containing sundry small Poems of the World's Vanity." These were, in their order, "The Ruins of Time," "The Tears of the

Muses," "Virgil's Gnat," "Prosopopoia, or Mother Hubbard's Tale," "The Ruins of Rome, by Bellay," "Muiopotmos, or the Fate of the Butterfly" (which seems to have appeared under some shape in 1590); "Visions of the World's Vanity;" "Bellay's Visions;" and "Petrarch's Visions." In his notice "to the gentle reader," the printer gives the titles of a number of other poems, on which he could not lay his hands, and which are now lost to us for ever—for Spenser either was content with the renown gained by "The Faerie Queen," or was prevented by his premature death from rendering justice to the labours of his youth. "The Ruins of Time," an elegy on the recent deaths of Sidney (1586), Leicester (1588), and Leicester's brother, the Earl of Warwick (1589), was written during the poet's stay in England; and so was his "Daphnaïda," an elegy on the death of the daughter of Henry Lord Howard Viscount Byndon, and wife of Arthur Gorges, Esq. Immediately after his return to Kilcolman, Spenser recounted the visit of Raleigh, and his voyage to England, in "Colin Clout's Come Home Again;" a poem which he kept by him for some years, and published in 1595, to refute—as the dedication to Raleigh shows—a reproach of his friend that he was "idle." In this, as in Spenser's greater pastoral, "Rosalind" holds a conspicuous place; but merely as a fondly-remembered and still revered idol of the past—not, as twelve years before, an object of fruitless desire embittering the poet's whole life. But "Rosalind" was soon to be dismissed from the place she yet held in Spenser's heart. About the end of 1592, it would seem, he fell in love with a fair Irishwoman, of whom we know little more than the fact that she had golden hair; bore—like Spenser's mother, and his Sovereign—the name of Elizabeth; and was, by birth and personal qualities, fully worthy to occupy the throne where Rosalind had reigned so long. The woman whom Spenser wooed as his "Sonnets" show, and, when he had won her, celebrated in his magnificent "Epithalamion," must surely have been of no ordinary attractions and character; but, save the particulars already stated, and the record that the poet married her on St Barnabas' Day, June the 11th, 1594, we know nothing about one whom her husband has rendered immortal in her obscurity.

Before his marriage, Spenser had completed the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Books of "The Faerie Queen;" but they were not at once given to the press. In 1595, the "Sonnets" and "Epithalamion" were published; and towards the end of that year Spenser came to England, bearing the second portion of his great poem, which was issued from Ponsonby's press in 1596, along with a reprint of the first three books. The publication raised Spenser, if possible, still higher in the regard of his contemporaries than before. But he was not destined long to enjoy his fame, which was all the greater for the rare rivalry of genius that distinguished the closing years of the sixteenth century. He found his friend Essex the reigning favourite; and although Burleigh was yet powerful in the Queen's councils, and, never having been friendly, could not be expected to further the poet's desire for preferment while he remained an intimate and protégé of Essex—still Spenser laid the foundation of what might have been a prosperous career, but for the blow of unforeseen misfortune. Dating from Greenwich, 1st September, 1596, Spenser dedicated to the Countess of Cumberland and the Countess of Warwick his four "Hymns"—in honour of Love, of Beauty, of Heavenly Love, and of Heavenly Beauty; and later in the year he published the "Prothalamion." Next year, he returned to Ireland; and we have no knowledge of his life there, until it was overtaken by fatal calamity. Lord Grey's stern suppression of the revolt of 1580 had but confined the flames of disaffection, which broke forth in 1598 with proportionately increased violence. Spenser was among the first marks for the vengeance of the wild Irishry. From whatever cause—it is said, through over-keen attention to his worldly interests—the poet was not popular in his own region. His "View of the Present State of

Ireland," recommending drastic remedies for the disorders and discontent of the country, had not been published ; but it had circulated freely in manuscript, and the sentiments of its author were well known. He held the seat of the banned and impoverished Desmonds. To crown all, the great obstacle to Court advancement having been removed by Burleigh's death, Spenser had just been nominated Sheriff of Cork. It was not surprising that, at the signal of rebellion, the owner of Kilcolman, the authoritative embodiment of armed aggression, should be the first to experience the wrath of the down-trodden race. The furious Munster hillsmen swooped on the doomed household. Spenser, his wife, and all his children but one, narrowly escaped with life—one child, an infant, was left behind in the haste and confusion, and perished amid the ruins of the sacked and burning mansion. It is not probable that this catastrophe lost to the world much of "*The Faerie Queen* ;" considering the time over which the production of the first six books had extended, and the recent long absence of the poet in England, much progress could not have been made with the contemplated second six—far less could they have been lost in the fire or the flight. But none the less did they perish on that cruel October day of 1598. The poet never wrote more. Arriving in London, destitute and sorrow-stricken, his heart broken by the common ruin of his home and his hopes, he died, apparently of sheer grief, in a tavern in King Street, Westminster, on the 16th of January 1599.

There is no ground for supposing that he died in actual distress ; he had many friends, he had great patrons, he still held a small but sufficient pension. But the end was sad enough, for all that. He died at the very height of his fame and his powers ; he had barely completed his forty-sixth year ; and the bitterness of that despairing death-bed must have been intensified by the poet's own consciousness of all that was passing away with him into the voiceless realm. His friend Essex buried him honourably in the great Abbey, near the resting-place of Chaucer ; poets attended his hearse, bearing elegies and mournful poems, and threw into the too early tomb the pens that wrote them. "A little man, who wore short hair ;" his contemporaries tell us no more of his personal presence : posterity has it that he was among the giants of the olden time, and that around his head will play for ever the glory of intellectual power, tempered by the chaste light of spiritual purity.

NOTE ON THE FAERIE QUEEN.

IN abridging The Faerie Queen for the present volume, the endeavour has been to retain every stanza that either possessed some peculiar beauty, or was essential for the carrying on of the story. But it has been above all sought to present the finer *passages* of the poem; and in seeking that end stanzas and lines may have been omitted whose absence some readers will regret. The Editor would fain believe that such will rarely be found the case; for, as in the prose outline representing the omitted passages every line of especial beauty or force has been embodied, so isolated stanzas, containing brilliant images, have almost invariably been preserved. To show to what extent the abridgment represents the original, the following table has been prepared, showing the entire number of stanzas in each canto, and the number of those stanzas which are retained in this volume:

		BOOK I.	BOOK II.		BOOK III.		BOOK IV.		BOOK V.		BOOK VI.		BOOK VII.
		Full.	Full.	Abdgd.	Full.	Abdgd.	Full.	Abdgd.	Full.	Abdgd.	Full.	Abdgd.	Full.
PROEM	.	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	11	11	7	7	—
CANTO	I.	55	61	21	67	28	54	17	30	9	47	17	—
"	II.	45	46	20	52	17	54	28	54	31	48	17	—
"	III.	44	46	23	62	19	52	24	40	14	51	13	—
"	IV.	51	46	23	61	21	48	17	51	15	40	16	—
"	V.	53	38	13	55	23	46	21	57	26	41	14	—
"	VI.	48	51	23	54	37	47	21	40	11	44	18	55
"	VII.	52	66	52	61	20	47	26	45	27	50	22	59
"	VIII.	50	56	17	52	18	64	32	51	18	51	28	2
"	IX.	54	60	46	53	19	41	16	50	36	46	34	—
"	X.	68	77	24	60	25	58	58	39	12	44	28	—
"	XI.	55	49	24	55	29	53	53	65	24	51	16	—
"	XII.	42	87	66	45	31	35	22	43	24	41	24	—
TOTAL,		621	688	357	682	292	604	340	576	258	561	254	116

Thus it appears, that, out of the 3848 stanzas of which the Faerie Queen consists, 2238, or nearly two-thirds, are retained; the remaining 1610 being condensed into a prose outline occupying one-fourth of their space, and thus making the bulk of the poem, as here given, about one-third less than that of the full text. The First Book, containing the Legend of the Red Cross Knight, or of Holiness, has been presented without curtailment, both because it is the best known and perhaps the best sustained of the six, and because it seemed desirable to give an idea of the manner in which Spenser worked out his conceptions. The marks employed in the text are the same as those used in Chaucer; the note of diæresis, to show where a usually silent "e" should be sounded, or to indicate where the termination "ed" of the past tense should have the value of a distinct syllable; and the acute accent, to show where the termination "tion" is dissyllabic, or where the accent differs from the modern usage. When several verses are quoted together in the prose outline, a wider space has been employed to mark the commencement of a new line.

THE
POEMS OF EDMUND SPENSER.

THE FAERIE QUEEN:

DISPOSED INTO TWELVE BOOKS, FASHIONING TWELVE MORAL VIRTUES.

A LETTER OF THE AUTHOR'S,
EXPOUNDING HIS WHOLE INTENTION IN THE
COURSE OF THIS WORK; WHICH, FOR THAT
IT GIVETH GREAT LIGHT TO THE READER,
FOR THE BETTER UNDERSTANDING IS HERE-
UNTO ANNEXED.

TO THE RIGHT NOBLE AND VALOROUS
SIR WALTER RALEIGH, Knight,
LORD WARDEN OF THE STANNARIES, AND HER MAJESTY'S
LIEUTENANT OF THE COUNTY OF CORNWALL.

SIR,—Knowing how doubtfully all allegories may be construed, and this book of mine, which I have entituled “The Faerie Queen,” being a continued Allegory, or dark Conceit, I have thought good, as well for avoiding of jealous opinions and misconstructions, as also for your better light in reading thereof (being so by you commanded), to discover unto you the general intention and meaning, which in the whole course thereof I have fashioned, without expressing of any particular purposes, or by-accidents,¹ therein occasioned. The general end, therefore, of all the book, is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline: which for that I conceived should be most plausible and pleasing, being coloured with an historical fiction, the which the most part of men delight to read, rather for variety of matter than for profit of the ensample, I chose the History of King Arthur, as most fit for the excellency of his person, being made famous by many men's former works, and also farthest from the danger of envy and suspicion of present time. In which I have fol-

¹ Episodes, incidents.

lowed all the antique poets historical: first Homer, who in the persons of Agamemnon and Ulysses hath ensampled a good governor and a virtuous man, the one in his *Ilias*, the other in his *Odysseis*; then Virgil, whose like intention was to do in the person of *Aeneas*; after him Ariosto comprised them both in his Orlando; and lately Tasso dissevered them again, and formed both parts in two persons, namely that part which they in philosophy call *Ethicé*, or virtues of a private man, coloured in his Rinaldo; the other, named *Politicé*, in his Godfredo. By ensample of which excellent poets, I labour to pourtray in Arthur, before he was king, the image of a brave knight, perfected in the twelve private Moral Virtues, as Aristotle hath devised;² the which is the purpose of these first twelve books: which if I find to be well accepted, I may be perhaps encouraged to frame the other part of Political Virtues in his person, after that he came to be king. To some I know this method will seem displeasing, which had rather have good discipline delivered plainly in way of precepts, or sermoned at large, as they use, than thus cloudily enwrapped in allegorical devices. But such, me seems, should be satisfied with the use of these days, seeing all things accounted by their shows, and nothing esteemed of, that is not delightful and pleasing to common sense. For this cause is Xenophon preferred before Plato, for that the one, in the exquisite depth of his judgment, formed a commonwealth, such as it should be; but the other, in the person of Cyrus, and the Persians, fashioned a government, such as might best be; so much more profitable and gracious is doctrine by ensample,

² Described.

than by rule. So have I laboured to do in the person of Arthur: whom I conceive, after his long education by Timon, to whom he was by Merlin delivered to be brought up, so soon as he was born of the Lady Igrayne, to have seen in a dream or vision the Faerie Queen, with whose excellent beauty ravished, he awaking resolved to seek her out; and so being by Merlin armed, and by Timon thoroughly instructed, he went to seek her forth in Faerie Land. In that Faerie Queen I mean *Glory* in my general intention, but in my particular I conceive the most excellent and glorious person of our Sovereign *the Queen*, and her kingdom in *Faerie Land*. And yet, in some places else, I do otherwise shadow her. For considering she beareth two persons, the one of a most royal Queen or Empress, the other of a most virtuous and beautiful lady, this latter part in some places I do express in *Belphebe*, fashioning her name according to your own excellent conceit of *Cynthia*: *Phoebe* and *Cynthia* being both names of *Diana*. So in the person of Prince Arthur I set forth *Magnificence* in particular; which *Virtue*, for that (according to Aristotle and the rest) it is the perfection of all the rest, and containeth in it them all, therefore in the whole I mention the deeds of Arthur applyable to that *Virtue*, which I write of in that book. But of the twelve other *Virtues*, I make twelve other knights the patterns, for the more variety of the history: of which these three books contain three.¹ The first, of the Knight of the Redcross, in whom I express *Holiness*; The second, of Sir Guyon, in whom I set forth *Temperance*; The third, of Britomart, a lady knight, in whom I picture *Chastity*. But, because the beginning of the whole work seemeth abrupt and as depending upon other antecedents, it needs that ye know the occasion of these three knights' several adventures; for the method of a poet historical is not such, as of an historiographer. For an historiographer discourseth of affairs orderly as they were done, accounting as well the times as the actions; but a poet thrusteth into the midst, even where it most concerneth him, and there recouring² to the things forepast, and divining of things to come, maketh a pleasing analysis of all. The beginning therefore of my history, if it were to be told by an historiographer, should be the twelfth book, which is the last; where I devise that the Faerie Queen kept her annual feast twelve days; upon which twelve several days, the occasions of the twelve several adventures happened, which, being undertaken by twelve several knights, are in these twelve books severally handled and discoursed. The first was this. In the beginning of the feast, there presented himself a tall clownish young man, who, falling before the Queen of Faeries, desired a boon (as the manner then was)

¹ The letter was sent to Raleigh with the first three books only; the second three were not published till several years afterwards.

² Recurring.

which during that feast she might not refuse; which was that he might have the achievement of any adventure, which during that feast should happen. That being granted, he rested him on the floor, as unfit, through his rusticity, for a better place. Soon after entered a fair lady in mourning weeds, riding on a white ass, with a dwarf behind her leading a warlike steed, that bore the arms of a knight, and his spear in the dwarf's hand. She, falling before the Queen of Faeries, complained that her father and mother, an ancient king and queen, had been by an huge dragon many years shut up in a brazen castle, who thence suffered them not to issue: and therefore besought the Faerie Queen to assign her some one of her knights, to take on him that exploit. Presently that clownish person upstarting, desired that adventure: whereat the Queen much wondering, and the lady much gainsaying, yet he earnestly importuned his desire. In the end the lady told him, that unless that armour, which she brought, would serve him (that is, the armour of a Christian man, specified by St Paul, vi. Ephes.) he could not succeed in that enterprise; which being forthwith put upon him with due furnitures thereunto, he seemed the goodliest man in all that company, and was well liked of the lady. And eftsoons³ taking on him knighthood, and mounting on that strange courser, he went forth with her on that adventure; where beginneth the first book, viz.

A gentle Knight was pricking on the plain, &c.⁴

The second day there came in a palmer, bearing an infant with bloody hands, whose parents he complained to have been slain by an enchantress called *Acrasia*: and therefore craved of the Faery Queen, to appoint him some knight, to perform that adventure; which being assigned to Sir Guyon, he presently went forth with that same palmer: which is the beginning of the second book and the whole subject thereof. The third day there came in a groom, who complained before the Faery Queen, that a vile enchanter, called *Busirane*, had in hand a most fair lady, called *Amoretta*, whom he kept in most grievous torment, because she would not yield him the pleasure of her body. Whereupon Sir Scudamour, the lover of that lady, presently took on him that adventure. But being unable to perform it by reason of the hard enchantments, after long sorrow, in the end he met with Britomart, who succoured him, and rescued his love. But, by occasion hereof, many other adventures are intermeddled,⁵ but rather as accidents, than intendments:⁶ As the love of Britomart, the overthrow of *Marionell*, the misery of *Florimell*, the virtuousness of *Belphebe*, the lasciviousness of *Hellenora*, and many the like. This much, Sir, I have

³ Immediately.

⁴ What is said here explains the fifth line of the First Book—"Yet arms till that time did he never wield."

⁵ Intermingled.

⁶ Deliberate parts of the plan.

briefly overrun to direct your understanding to the well-head of the history, that, from thence gathering the whole intention of the conceit, ye may as in a handful gripe¹ all the discourse, which otherwise may haply seem tedious and confused. So, humbly craving the continuance

of your honourable favour toward me, and the eternal establishment of your happiness, I humbly take leave.

Yours most humbly affectionate,
ED. SPENSER.

Jan. 23, 1589.

VERSES

ADDRESSED BY

THE AUTHOR OF THE FAERIE QUEEN

TO SEVERAL NOBLEMEN, ETC.

*To the Right Honourable Sir Christopher Hatton,²
Lord High Chancellor of England, &c.*

THOSE prudent heads, that with their counsels
wise

Whilom³ the pillars of th' earth did sustain,
And taught ambitious Rome to tyrannise
And on the neck of all the world to reign,
Oft from those grave affairs were wont abstain,
With the sweet lady Muses for to play :
So Ennius the elder Africain,⁴
So Maro⁵ oft did Cæsar's cares allay.

So you, great Lord, that with your counsel sway
The burden of this kingdom mightily,
With like delights sometimes may eke delay⁶
The rugged brow of careful Policy ;
And to these idle rhymes lend little space,
Which for their title's sake may find more
grace. E. S.

*To the Right Honourable the Lord Burleigh,⁷
Lord High Treasurer of England.*

To you, right noble Lord, whose careful breast
To menage⁸ of most grave affairs is bent,
And on whose mighty shoulders most doth
rest

The burden of this kingdom's government
(As the wide compass of the firmament
On Atlas' mighty shoulders is upstay'd),
Unfitly I these idle rhymes present,
The labour of lost time, and wit unstay'd :
Yet if their deeper sense be inly weigh'd,
And the dim veil, with which from common
view

Their fairer parts are hid, aside be laid,
Perhaps not vain they may appear to you.
Such as they be, vouchsafe them to receive,
And wipe their faults out of your censure
grave. E. S.

¹ Grasp.

² Made Lord Chancellor in 1587 ; he died in 1591.

³ Of old time.

⁴ Publius Cornelius Scipio, surnamed "Africanus" from his exploits in Africa. His adoptive son, Publius Æmilianus Scipio—son of Paulus Æmilius—also distinguished himself in Africa, and was termed "Africanus Junior."

⁵ Virgil ; whose full name was Publius Virgilius Maro.

⁶ Allay ; soften.

⁷ William Cecil, created Baron of Burghley 1571 ; he was Elizabeth's most famous Minister, and died in 1598.

⁸ Management ; French, "ménage."

*To the Right Honourable the Earl of Oxford,⁹
Lord High Chamberlain of England, &c.*

RECEIVE, most noble Lord, in gentle gree,¹⁰
The unripe fruit of an unready wit ;
Which, by thy countenance, doth crave to be
Defended from foul envy's pois'nous bit.¹¹
Which so to do may thee right well befit,
Since th' antique glory of thine ancestry
Under a shady veil is therein writ,
And eke thine own long-living memory,
Succeeding them in true nobility :
And also for the love which thou dost bear
To th' Heliconian imps,¹² and they to thee ;
They unto thee, and thou to them, most
dear :

Dear as thou art unto thyself, so love,—
That loves and honours thee, as doth behove,—
E. S.

*To the Right Honourable the Earl of
Northumberland.¹³*

THE sacred Muses have made always claim
To be the nurses of nobility,
And registers of everlasting fame
To all that arms profess and chivalry.
Then, by like right, the noble progeny,
Which them succeed in fame and worth, are
tied
To embrace the service of sweet Poetry,
By whose endeavours they are glorified ;
And eke from all, of whom it is envied,¹⁴
To patronize the author of their praise,
Which gives them life that else would soon
have died,
And crowns their ashes with immortal bays.
To thee therefore, right noble Lord, I send
This present of my pains, it to defend. E. S.

*To the Right Honourable the Earl of
Cumberland.¹⁵*

REDOUBTED Lord, in whose courageous mind
The flower of chivalry, now bloss'ming fair,
Doth promise fruit worthy the noble kind¹⁶
Which of their praises have you left the heir ;

⁹ Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl, who died in 1604 ; all his ancestors, except the tenth and eleventh Earls, had held the office of chamberlain, as did himself and his son, Henry. He wrote verses, among them a "Dialogue between Fancy and Desire."

¹⁰ Favour.

¹¹ Bite.

¹² The Muses, the children of Helicon.

¹³ Henry Percy, nephew of Thomas Percy, who was beheaded at York in 1572 ; the nephew succeeded his father Henry in 1585, and he died in 1632.

¹⁴ Regarded with jealousy or dislike.

¹⁵ George Clifford, third Earl ; he had in 1587 done good service against the Spaniards in the West Indies ; he died in 1605.

¹⁶ Race, ancestry.

To you this humble present I prepare,
 For love of virtue and of martial praise ;
 To which though nobly ye inclin'd are
 (As goodly well ye show'd in late assays),¹
 Yet brave ensample of long pass'd days,
 In which true honour ye may fashion'd see,
 To like desire of honour may ye raise,
 And fill your mind with magnanimity.
 Receive it, Lord, therefore, as it was meant,
 For honour of your name and high descent.
 E. S.

*To the most Honourable and excellent Lord the
 Earl of Essex,² Great Master of the Horse
 to her Highness, and Knight of the Noble
 Order of the Garter, &c.*

MAGNIFIC Lord, whose virtues excellent
 Do merit a most famous poet's wit
 To be thy living praise's instrument ;
 Yet do not sdeign³ to let thy name be writ
 In this base poem, for thee far unfit ;
 Naught is thy worth disparag'd thereby.
 But when my Muse,—whose feathers, nothing
 flit,⁴
 Do yet but flag and lowly learn to fly,—
 With bolder wing shall dare aloft to sty⁵
 To the last praises of this Faery Queen ;
 Then shall it make most famous memory
 Of thine heroic parts, such as they been :⁶
 Till then, vouchsafe thy noble countenance
 To their first labour's needed furtherance.
 E. S.

*To the Right Honourable the Earl of Ormond
 and Ossory.⁷*

RECEIVE, most noble Lord, a simple taste
 Of the wild fruit which salvage⁸ soil hath
 bred ;
 Which, being through long wars left almost
 waste,
 With brutish barbarism is overspread :
 And, in so fair a land as may be read,⁹
 Not one Parnassus, nor one Helicon
 Left for sweet Muses to be harbour'd,
 But where thyself hast thy brave mansion :
 There indeed dwell fair Graces many one,
 And gentle Nymphs, delights of learned wits ;
 And in thy person, without paragon,¹⁰
 All goodly bounty and true honour sits.
 Such therefore, as that wasted soil doth yield,
 Receive, dear Lord, in worth,¹¹ the fruit of
 barren field.
 E. S.

*To the Right Honourable the Lord Charles How-
 ard, Lord high Admiral of England,¹² Knight*

¹ Essays, trials.

² Robert Devereux, who succeeded his father Walter in the Earldom in 1576 ; he was Queen Elizabeth's favourite, made Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland 1599, and beheaded 1601.

³ Disdain ; from Italian, "sdegnare."

⁴ Fleet, swift.

⁵ Ascend ; German, "steigen," to climb, mount.

⁶ Are.

⁷ Lieutenant-General of the Army in Ireland when Spenser sent to him his first three books ; he lived in Ireland.

⁸ Savage, uncultured.

*of the Noble Order of the Garter, and one of
 her Majesty's Privy Council, &c.*

AND ye, brave Lord,—whose goodly personage
 And noble deeds, each other garnishing,
 Make you example, to the present age,
 Of the old heroes, whose famous offspring
 The antique poets wont so much to sing,—
 In this same pageant have a worthy place,
 Since those huge castles of Castilian King,
 That vainly threaten'd kingdoms to displace,
 Like flying doves ye did before you chase ;
 And that proud people, waxen¹³ insolent
 Through many victories, didst first deface :
 Thy praise's everlasting monument
 Is in this verse engraven semblably,¹⁴
 That it may live to all posterity.
 E. S.

*To the Right Honourable the Lord of Hunsdon,¹⁵
 High Chamberlain to her Majesty.*

RENOWN'D Lord, that, for your worthiness
 And noble deeds, have your deserv'd place
 High in the favour of that Emperess,
 The world's sole glory and her sex's grace ;
 Here eke of right have you a worthy place,
 Both for your nearness to that Faery Queen,
 And for your own high merit in like case :
 Of which apparent proof was to be seen
 When that tumultuous rage and fearful deed¹⁶
 Of Northern rebels ye did pacify,¹⁷
 And their dialoyal power defac'd clean,
 The record of enduring memory.
 Live, Lord, for ever in this lasting verse,
 That all posterity thy honour may rehearse.
 E. S.

*To the most renowned and valiant Lord, the
 Lord Grey of Wilton, Knight of the Noble
 Order of the Garter, &c.*

MOST noble Lord, the pillar of my life,
 And patron of my Muse's pupilage ;
 Through whose large bounty, pour'd on merite
 In the first season of my feeble age,
 I now do live bound yours by vassalage
 (Since nothing ever may redeem, nor reave¹⁸
 Out of your endless debt, so sure a gage¹⁹) ;
 Vouchsafe in worth this small gift to receive,
 Which in your noble hands for pledge I leave
 Of all the rest that I am tied t' account :²⁰
 Rude rhymes, the which a rustic Muse did
 weave
 In salvage⁸ soil, far from Parnassus Mount,
 And roughly wrought in an unlearn'd loom :
 The which vouchsafe, dear Lord, your favour-
 able doom.²¹
 E. S.

⁹ Read of, found.

¹⁰ Equal ; rival.

¹¹ As worthy of your esteem.

¹² Who commanded at sea against the Spanish Armada in 1588.

¹³ Grown.

¹⁴ With faithful resemblance.

¹⁵ Henry Carey, first Baron Hunsdon ; he died in 1596. His mother was sister to Anne Boleyn ; so that Queen Elizabeth was his cousin.

¹⁶ Din

¹⁷ In the Rebellion of the North in 1569.

¹⁸ Pluck away.

¹⁹ Pledge.

²⁰ For which I am bound to account.

²¹ Judgment.

*To the Right Honourable the Lord of Buckhurst,¹
one of her Majesty's Privy Council.*

IN vain I think, right honourable Lord,
By this rude rhyme to memorize thy name,
Whose learned Muse hath writ her own record
In golden verse, worthy immortal fame :
Thou much more fit (were leisure to the same)
Thy gracious Sov'reign's praises to compile,
And her imperial Majesty to frame
In lofty numbers and heroic style.
But, since thou may'st not so, give leave a
while

To baser wit his power therein to spend,
Whose gross defaults thy dainty pen may
file,²

And unadvised oversights amend.
But evermore vouchsafe it to maintain
Against vile Zoilus'³ backbitings vain. E. S.

To the Right Honourable Sir Francis Walsingham, Knight, principal Secretary to her Majesty, and one of her honourable Privy Council.

THAT Mantuan poet's⁴ incompar'd⁵ spirit,
Whose garland now is set in highest place,—
Had not Mæcenas, for his worthy merit,
It first advanc'd to great Augustus' grace,—
Might long perhaps have lain in silence base,
Nor been so much admir'd of later age.
This lowly Muse, that learns like steps to
trace,

Flies for like aid unto your patronage
(That are the great Mæcenas of this age,
As well to all that civil arts profess,
As those that are inspir'd with martial rage),
And craves protection of her feebleness :
Which if ye yield, perhaps ye may her raise
In bigger tunes to sound your living praise.

E. S.

To the Right Noble Lord and most valiant Captain, Sir John Norris, Knight, Lord President of Munster.

WHO ever gave more honourable prize⁶
To the sweet Muse, than did the martial crew,
That their brave deeds she might immortalize
In her shrill trump, and sound their praises
due?

Who then ought more to favour her than you,
Most noble Lord, the honour of this age,

¹ Thomas Sackville, who was created Earl of Dorset in 1603. He was in his youth a poet, but, betaking himself to politics, became Lord Treasurer and Privy Councillor to the Queen. ² Polish.

³ A rhetorician of Thrace, whose name became a proverb for a carping and envious critic, through his abusive and bitter strictures on the works of Homer, Hesiod, Demosthenes, Aristotle, Plato, and others. His great delight was to be known as "Homero-mastix," the Homer-scourger. ⁴ Virgil.

⁵ Matchless, unrivalled.

⁶ Praise, esteem.

⁷ Follow.

⁸ Counsel, prudence.

⁹ Pledge.

¹⁰ Raleigh was at this time at the height of royal favour and of activity ; incessantly planning ex-

And precedent of all that arms ensue?⁷

Whose warlike prowess and manly courage,
Temper'd with reason and advisement⁸ sage,
Hath fill'd sad Belgic with victorious spoil ;
In France and Ireland left a famous gage ;⁹
And lately shak'n the Lusitanian soil.
Since, then, each where thou hast disspread thy
fame,
Love him that hath eterniz'd your name. E. S.

To the Right Noble and Valorous Knight, Sir Walter Raleigh,¹⁰ Lord Warden of the Stannaries, and Lieutenant of Cornwall.

To thee, that art the summer's nightingale,
Thy sov'reign Goddess's¹¹ most dear delight,
Why do I send this rustic madrigale,
That may thy tuneful ear unseason¹² quite ?
Thou only fit this argument to write,
In whose high thoughts Pleasure hath built
her bow'r,
And dainty Love learn'd sweetly to indite.
My rhymes I know unsavoury and sour,
To taste the streams that, like a golden show'r,
Flow from thy fruitful head of thy love's
praise ;
Fitter perhaps to thunder martial stowre,¹³
When so thee list thy lofty Muse to raise :
Yet, till that thou thy poem wilt make known,
Let thy fair Cynthia's¹⁴ praises be thus rudely
shown. E. S.

To the Right Honourable and most virtuous Lady, the Countess of Pembroke.

REMEMBRANCE of that most heroic spirit,¹⁵—
The Heaven's pride, the glory of our days,
Which now triumpheth (through immortal
merit
Of his brave virtues) crown'd with lasting
bays
Of heavenly bliss and everlasting praise ;
Who first my Muse did lift out of the floor,
To sing his sweet delights in lowly lays,—
Bids me, most noble Lady, to adore
His goodly image living evermore
In the divine resemblance of your face ;
Which with your virtues ye embellish more,
And native beauty deck with heav'nly grace :
For his, and for your own especial sake,
Vouchsafe from him this token in good worth
to take. E. S.

peditions abroad, and busied in affairs of State at home.

¹¹ Queen Elizabeth's.

¹² Jar on ; be ill-timed to.

¹³ Conflict, strife.

¹⁴ In Raleigh's poem of "Cynthia," as in Spenser's *Faerie Queen*, the praises of his royal mistress were sung under an allegory. See the introductory letter to Raleigh. Cynthia is one of the names of Diana.

¹⁵ The Countess was the sister of the chivalrous and accomplished Sir Philip Sidney, the author of "Arcadia" and of the "Defence of Poetry." He was mortally wounded at the battle of Zutphen, in the Netherlands, in 1586.

*To the most virtuous and beautiful Lady, the
Lady Carew.¹*

NE² may I, without blot of endless blame,
You, fairest Lady, leave out of this place;
But with remembrance of your gracious
name
(Wherewith that courtly garland most ye
grace
And deck the world), adorn these verses base:
Not that these few lines can in them comprise
Those glorious ornaments of heav'nly grace
Wherewith ye triumph over feeble eyes,
And in subdu'd hearts do tyrannise
(For thereunto doth need a golden quill,
And silver leaves, them rightly to devise³);
But to make humble present of good will:
Which, when as timely means it purchase
may,
In ampler wise itself will forth display. E. S.

*To all the gracious and beautiful Ladies in the
Court.*

THE Ohian painter, when he was requir'd
To pourtray Venus in her perfect hue,
To make his work more absolute,⁴ desir'd
Of all the fairest maids to have the view.
Much more me needs (to draw the semblance⁵ true
Of Beauty's Queen, the world's sole wonder-
ment),
To sharp my sense with sundry beauties' view,
And steal from each some part of ornament.
If all the world to seek I over went,
A fairer crew yet nowhere could I see
Than that brave Court doth to mine eye present;
That the world's pride seems gather'd there to
be.
Of each a part I stole by cunning theft:
Forgive it me, fair Dames, since less ye have not
left. E. S.

THE FIRST BOOK

OF

THE FAERIE QUEEN:

CONTAINING

THE LEGEND OF THE KNIGHT OF THE REDCROSS, OR OF HOLINESS.

Lo! I, the man whose Muse whilom⁶ did mask,
As time her taught, in lowly shepherds' weeds,⁷
Am now enforc'd, a far unfitter task,
For trumpets stern to change mine oaten reeds,
And sing of Knights' and Ladies' gentle deeds;
Whose praises having slept in silence long,
Me, all too mean, the sacred Muse areads⁸
To blazon broad amongst her learned throng:
Fierce wars and faithful loves shall moralize my
song.

Help then, O holy Virgin;⁹ chief of Nine,
Thy weaker novice to perform thy will;
Lay forth out of thine everlasting shrine¹⁰
The antique rolls, which there lie hidden still,
Of Faery Knights, and fairest Tanaquill,¹¹
Whom that most noble Briton Prince so long
Sought through the world, and suffer'd so
much ill,
That I must rue¹² his undeserv'd wrong:
O, help thou my weak wit, and sharpen my
dull tongue!

And thou, most dreaded imp¹³ of highest Jove,
Fair Venus' son, that with thy cruel dart

At that good Knight so cunningly didst rove,¹⁴
That glorious fire it kindled in his heart;
Lay now thy deadly ebon bow apart,
And, with thy mother mild, come to mine aid;
Come, both; and with you bring triumphant
Mars,¹⁵

In loves and gentle jollities array'd,
After his murderous spoils and bloody rage
allay'd.

And with them eke, O Goddess heav'nly bright,¹⁶
Mirror of grace and majesty divine,
Great Lady of the greatest Isle, whose light
Like Phoebus' lamp throughout the world doth
shine,
Shed thy fair beams into my feeble eyne,¹⁷
And raise my thoughts, too humble and too
vile,
To think of that true glorious type of thine,
The argument of mine afflicted¹⁸ style:
The which to hear vouchsafe, O dearest Dread,¹⁹
a while.

CANTO I

*The Patron of true Holiness
Foul Error doth defeat;
Hypocrisy, him to entrap,
Doth to his home entreat.*

A GENTLE Knight was pricking²⁰ on the plain,
Y-clad in mighty arms and silver shield,

¹ Supposed to be the same as Lady Carey, whose maiden name was Spenser, and who was related to the poet.

² Not.

³ Tell, set forth.

⁴ Perfect. Zeuxis, when he painted Helen for the temple of Juno at Crotona, in Italy, took as his models five of the most beautiful girls in the city.

⁵ Likeness.

⁶ Formerly.

⁷ Referring to the "Shepherd's Calendar," which had been published ten years before, in 1579.

⁸ Counsels, commands. ⁹ Clio, the Muse of history.

¹⁰ The same word as "shrine;" from Latin, "scrinium," a chest or casket in which books, manuscripts, &c., were deposited. Clio, in ancient works of art, was usually represented with an open chest of books by her side.

¹¹ Gloriana; the Faerie Queen.

¹² Pity.

¹³ Descendant.

See note 26, page 156.

¹⁴ Shoot.

¹⁵ Mars.

¹⁶ Queen Elizabeth.

¹⁷ Eyes.

¹⁸ Humble.

¹⁹ Object of reverence; so Milton speaks of "our Living Dread."

²⁰ Spurring, riding.

Wherein old dints of deep wounds did remain,
The cruel marks of many a bloody field ;
Yet arms till that time did he never wield :
His angry steed did chide his foaming bit,
As much disdain to the curb to yield :
Full jolly ¹ knight he seem'd, and fair did sit,
As one for knightly jousts and fierce encounters
fit.

And on his breast a bloody cross he bore,
The dear remembrance of his dying Lord,
For whose sweetsake that glorious badge he wore,
And dead, as living ever, him ador'd :
Upon his shield the like was also scor'd,
For sov'reign hope which in his help he had.
Right faithful true he was in deed and word ;
But of his cheer ² did seem too solemn sad ;
Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was y-drad. ³

Upon a great adventure he was bond, ⁴
That greatest Gloriana to him gave
(That greatest glorious Queen of Faery Lond ⁵),
To win him worship, ⁶ and her grace to have,
Which of all earthly things he most did crave :
And ever, as he rode, his heart did yearn
To prove his puissance ⁷ in battle brave
Upon his foe, and his new force to learn ;
Upon his foe, a Dragon horrible and stern.

A lovely Lady rode him fair beside,
Upon a lowly ass more white than snow ;
Yet she much whiter ; but the same did hide
Under a veil, that wimpled was full low ;
And over all a black stole ⁸ she did throw :
As one that inly mourn'd, so was she sad,
And heavy sate upon her palfrey slow ;
Seem'd in heart some hidden care she had ;
And by her in a line a milk-white lamb she lad. ⁹

So pure and innocent as that same lamb
She was, in life and ev'ry virtuous lore ;
And by descent from royal lineage came
Of ancient kings and queens, that had of yore
Their sceptres stretch'd from east to western
shore,

And all the world in their subjection held ;
Till that infernal Fiend with foul uproar
Forwasted ¹⁰ all their land, and them expell'd ;
Whom to avenge she had this Knight from far
compell'd.

Behind her far away a Dwarf did lag,
That lazy seem'd, in being ever last,
Or wearied with bearing of her bag
Of needments ¹¹ at his back. Thus as they past,
The day with clouds was sudden overcast,
And angry Jove a hideous storm of rain
Did pour into his leman's ¹² lap so fast,
That every wight to shroud ¹³ it did constrain ;
And this fair couple eke to shroud themselves
were fain.

¹ Joyous ; handsome.

² Dreaded.

³ Land.

⁴ Power.

⁵ Utterly devastated.

⁶ His mistress—Tellus, or the Earth.

⁷ Seek cover or protection.

⁸ Shelter.

⁹ So called because it is used for the masts of ships. The enumeration of the trees in this and the succeeding stanza is imitated from Chaucer's description of the

¹⁰ Countenance, air.

¹¹ Bound.

¹² Honour.

¹³ Led.

¹⁴ Necessary.

¹⁵ Began.

Enforc'd to seek some covert nigh at hand,
A shady grove not far away they spied,
That promis'd aid the tempest to withstand ;
Whose lofty trees, y-clad with summer's pride,
Did spread so broad, that heaven's light did hide,
Not pierceable with power of any star ;
And all within were paths and alleys wide,
With footing worn, and leading inward far :
Fair harbour ¹⁴ that them seems ; so in they enter'd are.

And forth they pass, with pleasure forward led,
Joying to hear the birds' sweet harmony,
Which, therein shrouded from the tempest dread,
Seem'd in their song to scorn the cruel sky.
Much gan ¹⁵ they praise the trees so straight and high :

The sailing pine ; ¹⁶ the cedar proud and tall ;
The vine-prop elm ; the poplar never dry ;
The builder oak, sole king of forests all ;
The aspen good for staves ; the cypress funeral ;
The laurel, meed of mighty conquerours
And poets sage ; the fir that weepeth still ;
The willow, worn of fôrlorn paramours ; ¹⁷
The yew, obedient to the bender's will ; ¹⁸
The birch for shafts ; ¹⁹ the sallow for the mill ; ²⁰
The myrrh sweet-bleeding in the bitter wound ; ²¹
The warlike beech ; ²² the ash for nothing ill ;
The fruitful olive ; and the platane ²³ round ;
The carver holm ; ²⁴ the maple seldom inward
sound.

Led with delight, they thus beguile the way,
Until the blust'ring storm is overblown ;
When, weening ²⁵ to return whence they did stray,
They cannot find that path which first was shown,
But wander to and fro in ways unknown,
Farthest from end then, when they nearest ween ;
That makes them doubt their wits be not their
own :

So many paths, so many turnings seen,
That, which of them to take, in diverse doubt
they been. ²⁶

At last, resolving forward still to fare, ²⁷
Till that some end they find, or ²⁸ in or out,
That path they take that beaten seem'd most bare,
And like to lead the labyrinth about ;
Which when by tract they hunted had through-
out,

At length it brought them to a hollow cave,
Amid the thickest woods. The Champion stout
Eftsoons ²⁹ dismounted from his courser brave,
And to the Dwarf a while his needless ³⁰ spear
he gave.

"Be well aware," quoth then that Lady mild,
"Lest sudden mischief ye too rash provoke :
The danger hid, the place unknown and wild,
Breeds dreadful doubts : oft fire is without smoke,
park in the "Assembly of Fowls ;" but Spenser has
amplified the list and improved upon the original.

¹⁷ Lovers.

¹⁸ When fashioned into bows.

¹⁹ Arrows.

²⁰ For the sails of windmills, into which it was plaited.

²¹ The incision made to extract its odorous gum.

²² Used for the shafts of spears.

²³ Plane-tree.

²⁴ The cutting holly ; so called from its prickles.

²⁵ Thinking.

²⁶ Are.

²⁷ Go.

²⁸ Either.

²⁹ Immediately.

³⁰ Unneeded now, because used only on horseback.

And peril without show : therefore your stroke,
Sir Knight, withhold, till farther trial made."
"Ah, Lady," said he, "shame were to revoke¹
The forward footing for a hidden shade :
Virtue gives herself light through darkness for
to wade."

"Yea, but," quoth she, "the peril of this place
I better wot than you : though now too late
To wish you back return with foul disgrace,
Yet wisdom warns, whilst foot is in the gate,
To stay the step, ere forc'd to retrace.²
This is the wand'ring wood, this Error's den,
A monster vile, whom God and man does hate :
Therefore I read³ beware." "Fly, fly," quoth
then

The fearful Dwarf ; "this is no place for living
men."

But, full of fire and greedy hardiment,⁴
The youthful Knight could not for aught be
stay'd ;

But forth into the darksome hole he went,
And look'd in : his glist'ning armour made
A little glooming light, much like a shade ;
By which he saw the ugly monster plain,
Half like a serpent horribly display'd,
But th' other half did woman's shape retain,
Most loathsome, filthy, foul, and full of vile
disdain.

And, as she lay upon the dirty ground,
Her huge long tail her den all overspread ;
Yet was in knots and many boughts⁵ upwound,
Pointed with mortal sting ; of her there bred
A thousand young ones, which she daily fed,
Sucking upon her pois'nous dugs ; each one
Of sundry shapes, yet all ill-favour'd :
Soon as that uncouth⁶ light upon them shone,
Into her mouth they crept, and sudden all were
gone.

Their dam upstart out of her den afraid,
And rush'd forth, hurling her hideous tail
About her curs'd head ; whose folds display'd
Were stretch'd now forth at length without
entail.⁷

She look'd about, and seeing one in mail,
Arm'd to point, sought back to turn again ;
For light she hated as the deadly bale,⁸
Aye went in desert darkness to remain,
Where plain none might her see, nor she see
any plain.

Which when the valiant Elf⁹ perceiv'd, he leapt
As lion fierce upon the flying prey ;
And with his trenchant blade her boldly kept
From turning back, and forc'd her to stay :
Therewith enrag'd she loudly gan to bray,
And turning fierce her speckled tail advanc'd,
Threat'ning her angry sting, him to dismay ;
Who, naught aghast, his mighty hand enhanc'd ;¹⁰
The stroke down from her head unto her
shoulder glanc'd.

¹ Take back.² Retreat.³ Advise.⁴ Boldness.⁵ Colls.⁶ Strange, unknown.⁷ Twisting or intertwining.⁸ Misery, destruction.⁹ The Faery Knight.¹⁰ Lifted up.¹¹ Blow.

Much daunted with that dint¹¹ her sense was
daz'd ;¹²

Yet, kindling rage, herself she gather'd round,
And all at once her beastly body rais'd
With doubled forces high above the ground :
Tho,¹³ wrapping up her wreath'd stern¹⁴ around,
Leapt fierce upon his shield, and her huge train
All suddenly about his body wound,
That hand or foot to stir he strove in vain.
God help the man so wrapt in Error's endless
train !

His Lady, sad to see his sore constraint,
Cried out, "Now, now, Sir Knight, shew what
ye be ;

Add faith unto your force, and be not faint ;
Strangle her, else she sure will strangle thee."
That when he heard, in great perplexity,
His gall did grate¹⁵ for grief and high disdain ;
And, knitting all his force, got one hand free,
Wherewith he gript her gorge¹⁶ with so great pain,
That soon to loose her wicked bands did her con-
strain.

Therewith she spued out of her filthy maw
A flood of poison horrible and black,
Full of great lumps of flesh and gobbets raw,
Which stunk so vilely, that it forc'd him slack
His grasping hold, and from her turn him back :
Her vomit full of books and papers was,
With loathly frogs and toads, which eyes did
lack,

And, creeping, sought way in the weedy grass :
Her filthy parbreak¹⁷ all the place defil'd has.

As when old father Nilus gins to swell
With timely pride above th' Egyptian vale,
His fatty waves do fertile slime outwell,¹⁸
And overflow each plain and lowly dale :
But, when his later ebb gins to avale,¹⁹
Huge heaps of mud he leaves, wherein there
breed

Ten thousand kinds of creatures, partly male
And partly female, of his fruitful seed ;
Such ugly monstrous shapes elsewhere may no
man read.²⁰

The same so sore annoy'd²¹ has the Knight,
That, well-nigh chok'd with the deadly stink,
His forces fail, nor can no longer fight.
Whose courage when the fiend perceiv'd to shrink,
She pour'd forth out of her hellish sink
Her fruitful curs'd spawn of serpents small
(Deform'd monsters, foul, and black as ink),
Which swarming all about his legs did crawl,
And him encumber'd sore, but could not hurt
at all.

As gentle shepherd in sweet eventide,
When ruddy Phoebus gins to welk²² in west,
High on a hill, his flock to viewen wide,
Marks which do bite their hasty supper best ;
A cloud of cumbrous gnats do him molest,
All striving to infix their feeble stings,

¹² Confused.¹³ Then.¹⁴ Her twisted tail.¹⁵ His bile was harshly stirred—his anger was aroused.¹⁶ Throat.¹⁷ Vomit.¹⁸ Make fertile slime flow forth.¹⁹ Abate.²⁰ Discover, imagine.²¹ Tormented.²² Decline.

That from their noyance¹ he nowhere can rest ;
But with his clownish hands their tender wings
He brusheth oft, and oft doth mar their mur-
muring ;

Thus ill bested, and fearful more of shame
Than of the certain peril he stood in,
Half furious unto his foe he came,
Resolv'd in mind all suddenly to win,
Or soon to lose, before he once would lin ;²
And struck at her with more than manly force,
That from her body, full of filthy sin,
He reft her hateful head without remorse :
A stream of coal-black blood forth gush'd from
her corse.

Her scatter'd brood, soon as their parent dear
They saw so rudely falling to the ground,
Groaning full deadly all with troublous fear,
Gather'd themselves about her body round,
Weening³ their wonted entrance to have found
At her wide mouth ; but, being there withstood,
They flock'd all about her bleeding wound,
And suck'd up their dying mother's blood ;
Making her death their life, and eke her hurt
their good.

That détestable sight him much amaz'd,
To see th' unkindly imps, of heav'n accurst,
Devour their dam ; on whom while so he gaz'd,
Having all satisfied their bloody thirst,
Their bellies swoll'n he saw with fulness burst,
And bowels gushing forth : well worthy end
Of such as drunk her life, the which them nurst !
Now needeth him no longer labour spend,
His foes have slain themselves, with whom he
should contend.

His Lady, seeing all that chanc'd from far,
Approach'd in haste to greet his victory ;
And said, " Fair Knight, born under happy star,
Who see your vanquish'd foes before you lie ;
Well worthy be you of that armoury
Wherein ye have great glory won this day,
And prov'd your strength on a strong enemy ;
Your first adventure : many such I pray,
And henceforth ever wish that like succeed it
may ! "

Then mounted he upon his steed again,
And with the Lady backward sought to wend :
That path he kept, which beaten was most plain,
Nor ever would to any by-way bend ;
But still did follow one unto the end,
The which at last out of the wood them brought.
So forward on his way (with God to friend)
He pass'd forth, and new adventure sought :
Long way he travell'd, before he heard of aught.

At length they chanc'd to meet upon the way
An aged Sire, in long black weeds y-clad,
His feet all bare, his beard all hoary gray,
And by his belt his book he hanging had ;
Sober he seem'd, and very sagely sad ;⁴
And to the ground his eyes were lowly bent,
Simple in show, and void of malice bad ;

¹ Torment.³ Thinking.⁶ Returned his greeting.⁷ Sins.⁴ Grave.² Desist.⁵ Bowing.

And all the way he pray'd, as he went,
And often knock'd his breast, as one that did
repent.

He fair the Knight saluted, louting⁵ low,
Who fair him quited,⁶ as that courteous was ;
And after ask'd him, if he did know
Of strange adventures, which abroad did pass.
" Ah ! my dear son," quoth he, " how should,
alas !

Silly old man, that lives in hidden cell,
Bidding his beads all day for his trespass,⁷
Tidings of war and worldly trouble tell ?
With holy father sits not⁸ with such things to
mell.⁹

" But if of danger, which hereby doth dwell,
And homebred evil ye desire to hear,
Of a strange man I can you tidings tell,
That wasteth all this country far and near."
" Of such," said he, " I chiefly do inquire ;
And shall thee well reward to show the place,
In which that wicked wight his days doth wear :
For to all knighthood it is foul disgrace,
That such a curs'd creature lives so long a
space."

" Far hence," quoth he, " in wasteful wilderness
His dwelling is, by which no living wight
May ever pass, but thorough great distress."
" Now," said the Lady, " draweth toward night ;
And well I wot, that of your later fight
Ye all forwearied¹⁰ be ; for what so strong,
But, wanting rest, will also want of might ?
The sun, that measures heaven all day long,
At night doth bait his steeds the ocean waves
among.

" Then with the sun take, Sir, your timely rest,
And with new day new work at once begin :
Untroubled night, they say, gives counsel best."
" Right well, Sir Knight, ye have advis'd been,"
Quoth then that aged man ; " the way to win
Is wisely to advise : ¹¹ now day is spent ;
Therefore with me ye may take up your inn¹²
For this same night." The Knight was well
content :
So with that godly Father to his home they went.

A little lowly hermitage it was,
Down in a dale, hard by a forest's side,
Far from resort of people that did pass
In travel to and fro : a little wide¹³
There was a holy chapel edified,¹⁴
Wherein the Hermit duly wont to say
His holy things each morn and eventide ;
Thereby a crystal stream did gently play,
Which from a sacred fountain well'd forth alway.

Arriv'd there, the little house they fill,
Nor look for entertainment, where none was ;
Rest is their feast, and all things at their will :
The noblest mind the best contentment has.
With fair discourse the ev'ning so they pass ;
For that old man of pleasing words had store,
And well could file¹⁵ his tongue, as smooth as glass:

⁸ It is not fitting.¹⁰ Utterly wearied.¹² Lodging.¹⁴ Built.⁹ Meddle.¹¹ Consider.¹³ Apart.¹⁵ Polish.

He told of saints and popes, and evermore
He strow'd an Ave-Mary after and before.

The drooping night thus creepeth on them fast;
And the sad humour loading their eye-lids,
As messenger of Morpheus, on them cast
Sweet slumb'ring dew, the which to sleep
them bids.

Unto their lodgings then his guest he rides:¹
Where when all drown'd in deadly sleep he finds,
He to his study goes; and there amidst
His magic books, and arts of sundry kinds,
He seeks out mighty charms to trouble sleepy
minds.

Then choosing out few words most horrible
(Let none them read!) thereof did verses frame;
With which, and other spells like terrible,
He bade awake black Pluto's grisly dame;²
And curs'd Heaven; and spake reproachful shame
Of highest God, the Lord of life and light.
A bold bad man! that dar'd to call by name
Great Gorgon,³ prince of darkness and dead night;
At which Cocytus⁴ quakes, and Styx⁴ is put to
flight.

And forth he call'd out of deep darkness dread
Legions of sprites, the which, like little flies,
Flutt'ring about his ever-damn'd head,
Await whereto their service he applies,
To aid his friends, or fray⁵ his enemies:
Of those he chose out two, the falsest two,
And fittest for to forge true-seeming lies;
The one of them he gave a message to,
The other by himself stay'd other work to do.

He, making speedy way through spers'd⁶ air,
And through the world of waters wide and deep,
To Morpheus'⁷ house doth hastily repair.
Amid the bowels of the earth, full steep
And low, where dawning day doth never peep,
His dwelling is; there Tethys⁸ his wet bed
Doth ever wash, and Cynthia⁹ still doth steep
In silver dew his ever-drooping head,
While sad Night over him her mantle black
doth spread.

Whose double gates he findeth lock'd fast;
The one fair fram'd of burnish'd ivory,
The other all with silver overcast;
And wakeful dogs before them far do lie,
Watching to banish Care their enemy,
Who oft is wont to trouble gentle Sleep.
By them the sprite doth pass in quietly,
And unto Morpheus comes, whom drown'd deep
In drowsy fit he finds; of nothing he takes keep.¹⁰

And, more to lull him in his slumber soft,
A trickling stream from high rock tumbling down,

¹ Conducts, and thus rids himself of their company.
² Hecate; the mysterious divinity identified with
Luna in heaven, Diana on earth, Proserpine in hell.

³ A mysterious and dreaded deity, whose name the
ancients feared to utter. Hence Milton speaks of "the
dreaded name of Demogorgon." The derivation of the
word is from the Greek, γοργος, dreadful; and the
idea no doubt arose from the fable of the Gorgons—
the three malign goddesses whose hairs were twisted
snakes, and whose glance turned their victim to stone.

⁴ Rivers in hell.

⁵ Affright.

⁶ Dispersed, thin.

⁷ Son of Somnus, the god of sleep; usually repre-

And ever-drizzling rain upon the loft,¹¹
Mix'd with a murmuring wind, much like the
soun'¹²

Of swarming bees, did cast him in a swoon.¹³
No other noise, nor people's troublous cries,
As still are wont t' annoy the wall'd town,
Might there be heard: but careless Quiet lies,
Wrapt in eternal silence, far from enemies.

The messenger approaching to him spake;
But his waste words return'd to him in vain:
So sound he slept, that naught might him awake.
Then rudely he him thrust, and push'd with pain,
Whereat he gan to stretch: but he again
Shook him so hard, that forc'd him to speak.
As one then in a dream, whose drier brain
Is toss'd with troubled sights and fancies weak,
He mumbled soft, but would not all his silence
break.

The Sprite then gan more boldly him to wake,
And threaten'd unto him the dreaded name
Of Hecate: whereat he gan to quake,
And, lifting up his lumpish¹⁴ head, with blame
Half angry ask'd him, for what he came.
"Hither," quoth he, "me Archimago sent,
He that the stubborn sprites can wisely tame;
He bids thee to him send, for his intent,¹⁵
A fit false dream, that can delude the sleeper's
scent."¹⁶

The god obey'd; and, calling forth straightway
A diverse¹⁷ dream out of his prison dark,
Deliver'd it to him, and down did lay
His heavy head, devoid of careful cark;¹⁸
Whose senses all were straight benumb'd and
stark.

He,¹⁹ back returning by the ivory door,
Remounted up as light as cheerful lark;
And on his little wings the dream he bore
In haste unto his lord, where he him left before.

Who all this while, with charms and hidden arts,
Had made a lady of that other sprite,
And fram'd of liquid air her tender parts,
So lively,²⁰ and so like in all men's sight,
That weaker sense it could have ravish'd quite:
The maker's self, for all his wondrous wit,
Was nigh beguil'd with so goodly sight.
Her all in white he clad, and over it
Cast a black stole,²¹ most like to seem for Una
fit.

Now when that idle dream was to him brought,
Unto that Elfin Knight he bade him fly,—
Where he slept soundly, void of evil thought,—
And with false shows abuse his fantasy,²²
In sort²³ as he him school'd privily.

sented as a fat child, though here he is placed in the
supreme position of his father.

⁸ The principal goddess of the sea; wife of Oceanus,
and daughter of Uranus and Terra.

⁹ Diana; the Moon.

¹⁰ Heed.

¹¹ On high.

¹² Noise, sound.

¹³ Deep sleep, like that of one who has swooned.

¹⁴ Heavy.

¹⁵ Purpose.

¹⁶ Perception, sense.

¹⁷ Erroneous, misleading.

¹⁸ Anxiety.

¹⁹ The messenger.

²⁰ Lifelike.

²¹ Robe.

²² Fancy.

²³ Such manner.

And that new creature, born without her due,¹
Full of the maker's guile, with usage sly
He taught to imitate that Lady true,
Whose semblance she did carry under feign'd
hue.

Thus well instructed, to their work they haste;
And, coming where the Knight in slumber lay,
The one upon his hardy² head him plac'd,
And made him dream of loves and lustful play;
That nigh his manly heart did melt away,
Bath'd in wanton bliss and wicked joy.
Then seem'd him his Lady by him lay,
And to him plain'd, how that false wing'd boy
Her chaste heart had subdu'd to learn dame
Pleasure's toy;

And she herself, of beauty sov'reign queen,
Fair Venus, seem'd unto his bed to bring
Her whom he, waking, evermore did ween³
To be the chastest flower that eye did spring
On earthly branch, the daughter of a king,
Now a loose leman⁴ to vile service bound:
And eke the Graces seem'd all to sing
Hymen Io Hymen, dancing all around;
Whilst freshest Flora her with ivy garland
crown'd.

In this great passion of unwonted lust,
Or wonted fear of doing aught amiss,
He starteth up, as seeming to mistrust
Some secret ill, or hidden foe of his:
Lo, there before his face his Lady is,
Under black stole hiding her baited hook;
And, as half blushing, offer'd him to kiss,
With gentle blandishment and lovely look,
Most like that Virgin true, which for her
Knight him took.

All clean dismay'd to see so uncouth⁵ sight,
And half enrag'd at her shameless guise,
He thought have slain her in his fierce despite;⁶
But, hasty heat temp'ring with suff'rance⁷ wise,
He stay'd his hand; and gan himself advise⁸
To prove his sense,⁹ and tempt her feign'd truth.
Wringing her hands, in women's piteous wise,
Then gan she weep, to stir up gentle ruth,¹⁰
Both for her noble blood, and for her tender
youth.

And said, "Ah Sir, my liege lord, and my love,
Shall I accuse the hidden cruel fate,
And mighty causes wrought in heaven above,
Or the blind god, that doth me thus amate,¹¹
For hop'd love, to win me certain hate?
Yet thus perforce he bids me do, or die.
Die is my due;¹² yet rue¹⁰ my wretched state,
You, whom my hard avenging destiny
Hath made judge of my life or death indif-
f'rently:

"Your own dear sake forc'd me at first to leave
My father's kingdom"—There she stopt with
tears;
Her swollen heart her speech seem'd to bereave;

¹ Produced without the due qualities of a real woman
—or not according to the due process of nature.
² Bold. ³ Suppose. ⁴ Wanton. ⁵ Unfamiliar.
⁶ Anger. ⁷ Patience. ⁸ Counsel.
⁹ Whether his senses did not deceive him.
¹⁰ Pity. ¹¹ Bewilder, subdue.

And then again begun; "My weaker years,
Captiv'd to fortune and frail worldly fears,
Fly to your faith for succour and sure aid:
Let me not die in languor and long tears."

"Why, dame," quoth he, "what hath ye thus
dismay'd?
What frays¹³ ye, that were wont to comfort me
affray'd?"

"Love of yourself," she said, "and dear con-
straint,

Lets me not sleep, but waste the weary night
In secret anguish and unpitied plaint,
While you in careless sleep are drown'd quite."
Her doubtful words made that redoubt'd Knight
Suspect her truth; yet since n' untruth he knew,
Her fawning love with foul disdainful spite
He would not shend;¹⁴ but said, "Dear Dame,
I rue

That for my sake unknown such grief unto you
grew:

"Assure yourself, it fell not all to ground;
For all so dear, as life is to my heart,
I deem your love, and hold me to you bound:
Nor let vain fears procure your needless smart,
Where cause is none; but to your rest depart."
Not all content, yet seem'd she to appease
Her mournful plaints, beguill'd of her art,
And fed with words that could not choose but
please:

So, sliding softly forth, she turn'd as to her ease.

Long after lay he musing at her mood,
Much griev'd to think that gentle Dame so light,
For whose defence he was to shed his blood.

At last dull weariness of former fight
Having y-rock'd asleep his irksome sprite,¹⁵
That troublous dream gan freshly toss his brain
With bowers, and beds, and ladies' dear delight:
But, when he saw his labour all was vain,
With that misform'd Sprite he back return'd
again.

CANTO II.

*The guileful great Enchanter parts
The Redcross Knight from Truth:
Into whose stead fair Falsehood steps,
And works him woe'ful ruth.*

By this the Northern Waggoner¹⁶ had set
His sev'nfold team behind the steadfast star¹⁷
That was in ocean waves yet never wet,
But firm is fix'd, and sendeth light from far
To all that in the wide deep wand'ring are;
And cheerful chanticleer, with his note shrill,
Had warn'd once, that Phoebus' fiery car
In haste was climbing up the eastern hill,
Full envious that Night so long his room did fill:
When those accurs'd messengers of hell,
That feigning Dream, and that fair-forg'd Sprite,

¹³ I deserve to die.

¹⁴ Affrights.

¹⁵ Disgrace, chide.

¹⁶ Wearied, distressed spirit.

¹⁷ Boötes, the Great Bear; popularly called "Charles's
Wain" in some parts of the country.

¹⁸ The Pole-star.

Came to their wicked master, and gan tell
Their bootless pains and ill-succeeding night :
Who, all in rage to see his skilful might
Deluded so, gan threaten hellish pain
And sad Proserpine's wrath, them to affright.
But, when he saw his threat'ning was but vain,
He cast about, and search'd his baleful books
again.

Eftsoons¹ he took that miscreated Fair,
And that false other Sprite, on whom he spread
A seeming body of the subtile air,
Like a young squire, in loves and lustihead²
His wanton days that ever loosely led,
Without regard of arms and dreaded fight :
Those two he took, and in a secret bed,
Cover'd with darkness and misdeeming³ night,
Them both together laid, to joy in vain delight.
Forthwith he runs, with feign'd-faithful haste,
Unto his guest, who, after troublous sights
And dreams, gan now to take more sound repast ;⁴
Whom suddenly he wakes with fearful frights,
As one aghast⁵ with fiends or damn'd sprites,
And to him calls ; " Rise, rise, unhappy swain,
That here wax old in sleep,⁶ while wicked wights
Have knit themselves in Venus' shameful chain :
Come, see where your false Lady doth her
honour stain."

All in a maze he suddenly upstart,
With sword in hand, and with the old man went ;
Who soon him brought into a secret part,
Where that false couple were full closely ment⁷
In wanton lust and lewd embracement :
Which when he saw, he burn'd with jealous fire ;
The eye of reason was with rage y-blent ;⁸
And would have slain them in his furious ire,
But hardly was restrain'd of that aged sire.
Returning to his bed, in torment great
And bitter anguish of this guilty sight,
He could not rest : but did his stout heart eat,
And waste his inward gall with deep despite,
Irksome⁹ of life, and too long ling'ring night.
At last fair Hesperus in highest sky
Had spent his lamp, and brought forth dawn-
ing light ;
Then up he rose, and clad him hastily ;
The Dwarf him brought his steed : so both
away do fly.

Now when the rosy-finger'd Morning fair,
Weary of aged Tithon's¹⁰ saffron bed,
Had spread her purple robe through dewy air,
And the high hills Titan¹¹ discover'd ;
The royal Virgin shook off drowsihead :¹²
And, rising forth out of her baser bow'r,¹³
Look'd for her Knight, who far away was fled,
And for her Dwarf, that wont to wait each hour.
Then gan she wail and weep to see that woeful
stowre.¹⁴

And after him she rode, with so much speed

¹ Immediately. ² Pleasure. ³ Misleading.
⁴ Repose. ⁵ Terrified. ⁶ Linger too long in sleep.
⁷ Mingled. ⁸ Blinded, deceived. ⁹ Weary.
¹⁰ Tithonus, the brother of Priam, was beloved of
Aurora, goddess of the Morn, whose prayers won for
him immortality, but not everlasting youth ; he shrank
into a wretched figure in his old age, and Aurora changed
him to a cicada. ¹¹ The Sun. ¹² Drowsiness.

As her slow beast could make ; but all in vain :
For him so far had borne his light-foot steed,
Prick'd¹⁵ with wrath and fiery fierce disdain.
That him to follow was but fruitless pain :
Yet she her weary limbs would never rest ;
But ev'ry hill and dale, each wood and plain,,
Did search, sore griev'd in her gentle breast,
He so ungently left her, whom she lov'd best

But subtile Archimago, when his guests
He saw divided into double parts,¹⁶
And Una wand'ring in woods and forests
(Th' end of his drift), he prais'd his devilish arts,
That had such might over true-meaning hearts :
Yet rests not so, but other means doth make
How he may work unto her further smarts :
For her he hated as the hissing snake,
And in her many troubles did most pleasure
take.

He then devis'd himself how to disguise ;
For by his mighty science he could take
As many forms and shapes, in seeming wise,
As ever Proteus to himself could make :
Sometimes a fowl, sometimes a fish in lake,
Now like a fox, now like a dragon fell ;
That of himself he oft for fear would quake,
And oft would fly away. O who can tell
The hidden power of herba, and might of magic
spell !

But now seem'd best the person¹⁷ to put on
Of that good Knight, his late beguil'd guest :—
In mighty arms he was y-clad anon,
And silver shield ; upon his coward breast
A bloody cross, and on his craven crest
A bunch of hairs discolour'd diversely.
Full jolly Knight he seem'd, and well address ;¹⁸
And, when he sat upon his courser free,
Saint George himself ye would have deem'd
him to be.

But he, the Knight, whose semblance he did bear,
The true Saint George, was wander'd far away.
Still flying from his thoughts and jealous fear :
Will was his guide, and grief led him astray.
At last him chanc'd to meet upon the way
A faithless Saracen, all arm'd to point,¹⁹
In whose great shield was writ with letters gay
Sans foy ;²⁰ full large of limb and every joint
He was, and car'd not for God or man a point.
He had a fair companion of his way,
A goodly lady clad in scarlet red,
Purfl'd²¹ with gold and pearl of rich assay ;²²
And like a Persian mitre on her head
She wore, with crowns and ouches²³ garnish'd,
The which her lavish lovers to her gave :
Her wanton palfrey all was overspread
With tinsel trappings, woven like a wave,
Whose bridle rang with golden bells and bosses
brave.

With fair disport, and courting dalliance,

¹³ Her lower, humbler, chamber—in comparison with
Aurora's.
¹⁴ Trouble, mischance.
¹⁵ Spurred.
¹⁶ Appearance.
¹⁷ Armed at all points.
¹⁸ Embroidered, bordered.
¹⁹ Bosses or buttons of gold.
²⁰ Without Faith.
²¹ Of great value.
²² Into two parties.
²³ Equipped.

She entertain'd her lover all the way :
But, when she saw the Knight his spear advance,
She soon left off her mirth and wanton play,
And bade her knight address him to the fray :
His foe was nigh at hand. He, prick'd with pride,
And hope to win his lady's heart that day,
Forth spurrd fast ; adown his courser's side
The red blood trickling, stain'd the way as he
did ride.

The Knight of the Redcross, when him he spied
Spurring so hot with rage dispiteous,¹
Gan fairly couch his spear, and toward ride :
Soon meet they both, both fell and furious,
That, daunted with their forces hideous,
Their steeds do stagger, and amaz'd stand ;
And eke themselves, too rudely rigorous,
Astonish'd with the stroke of their own hand,
Do back rebut,² and each to other yieldeth
land.³

As when two rams, stirr'd with ambitious pride,
Fight for the rule of the rich-fleec'd flock,
Their horn'd fronts so fierce on either side
Do meet, that, with the terror of the shock
Astonish'd, both stand senseless as a block,
Forgetful of the hanging⁴ victory :
So stood these twain, unmov'd as a rock,
Both staring fierce, and holding idly
The broken reliques of their former cruelty.⁵

The Saracen, sore daunted with the buff,⁶
Snatcheth his sword, and fiercely to him flies ;
Who well it wards, and quiteth cuff with cuff ;⁷
Each th' other's equal puiss'ance envies,⁸
And through their iron sides with cruel spies⁹
Does seek to pierce ; repining courage yields
No foot to foe : the flashing fier flies,
As from a forge, out of their burning shields ;
And streams of purple blood new dye the ver-
dant fields.

"Curse on that Cross," quoth then the Saracen,
"That keeps thy body from the bitter fit ;¹⁰
Dead long ago, I wot, thou haddest been,
Had not that charm from thee forwarn'd it :¹¹
But yet I warn thee now, assur'd sit,
And hide thy head." Therewith upon his crest
With rigour so outrageous he smit,
That a large share it hew'd out of the rest,
And, glancing down, his shield from blame him
fairly blest.¹²

Who, thereat wondrous wroth, the sleeping
spark
Of native virtue gan eftsoons¹³ revive ;
And, at his haughty helmet making mark,
So hugely struck, that it the steel did rive,
And cleft his head : he, tumbling down alive,
With bloody mouth his mother earth did kiss,
Greeting his grave : his grudging¹⁴ ghost did strive
With the frail flesh ; at last it flitted is,
Whither the souls do fly of men that live amiss.

The lady, when she saw her champion fall,
Like the old ruins of a broken tow'r,
Stay'd not to wail his woeful funeral ;
But from him fled away with all her pow'r :
Who after her as hastily gan scour,
Bidding the Dwarf with him to bring away
The Saracen's shield, sign of the conqueror ;
Her soon he overtook, and bade to stay ;
For present cause was none of dread her to dismay.

She, turning back, with rueful countenance
Cried, "Mercy, mercy, Sir, vouchsafe to show
On silly¹⁵ dame, subject to hard mischance,
And to your mighty will." Her humbless¹⁶ low
In so rich weeds,¹⁷ and seeming glorious show,
Did much enmove¹⁸ his stout heroic heart ;
And said, "Dear Dame, your sudden overthrow¹⁹
Much rueth²⁰ me ; but now put fear apart,
And tell, both who ye be, and who that took
your part."

Melting in tears, then gan she thus lament :
"The wretched woman, whom unhappy hour
Hath now made thrall to your commandment,
Before that angry heavens list²¹ to low'r,
And fortune false betray'd me to your pow'r,
Was (O what now availeth that I was !)
Born the sole daughter of an emperour ;
He that the wide West under his rule has,
And high hath set his throne where Tiberis
doth pass.

"He, in the first flow'r of my freshest age,
Betroth'd me unto the only heir
Of a most mighty king, most rich and sage ;
Was never prince so faithful and so fair,
Was never prince so meek and debonair !²²
But, ere my hop'd day of spousal shone,
My dearest lord fell from high honour's stair
Into the hands of his accursed fone,²³
And cruelly was alain ; that shall I ever moan !

"His bless'd body, spoil'd of lively breath,
Was afterward, I know not how, convey'd,
And from me hid ; of whose most innocent death
When tidings came to me, unhappy maid,
O, how great sorrow my sad soul assay'd !²⁴
Then forth I went his woeful corse to find,
And many years throughout the world I stray'd,
A virgin widow ; whose deep-wounded mind
With love long time did languish, as the
stricken hind.

"At last it chanc'd this proud Saracen
To meet me wand'ring ; who perforce me led
With him away ; but yet could never win
The fort that ladies hold in sov'reign dread.
There lies he now, with foul dishonour dead,
Who, while he liv'd, was call'd proud Sansfoy,
The eldest of three brethren ; all three bred
Of one bad sire, whose youngest is Sansjoy ;²⁵
And 'twixt them both was born the bloody bold
Sansloy.²⁶

1 Despitful.

2 Recoil.

3 Gives ground.

4 Dubious.

5 Their broken spears.

6 Buffet, stroke

7 Repays blow with blow.

8 Begrudges the other's equal strength—would fain
weaken his foe.

9 Their weapons.

10 Stroke.

11 Warded it off.

12 Protected from harm.

13 Straightway.

14 Reluctant.

15 Humility.

16 Stir, disturb.

18 Grieveth.

22 Gentle.

24 Tried, assailed.

26 Without Law.

15 Innocent.

17 Garments.

19 Misfortune.

21 Pleased.

23 Foes.

25 Without Joy.

"In this sad plight, friendless, unfortunate,
Now miserable I Fidesa¹ dwell,
Craving of you, in pity of my state,
To do none ill, if please ye not do well."
He in great passion² all this while did dwell,
More busying his quick eyes her face to view,
Than his dull ears to hear what she did tell;
And said, "Fair Lady, heart of flint would rue³
The undeserv'd woes and sorrows which ye shew.

"Henceforth in safe assurance may ye rest,
Having both found a new friend you to aid,
And lost an old foe that did you molest:
Better new friend than an old foe, is said."
With change of cheer⁴ the seeming-simple maid
Let fall her eyne, as shamefast, to the earth,
And, yielding soft, in that she naught gainsay'd.
So forth they rode, he feigning seemly mirth,
And she coy looks: so dainty, they say, maketh
dearth.⁵

Long time they thus together travell'd;
Till, weary of their way, they came at last
Where grew two goodly trees, that fair did spread
Their arms abroad, with gray moss overcast;
And their green leaves, trembling with every
blast,
Made a calm shadow far in compass round: .
The fearful shepherd, often there aghast,⁶
Under them never sat, nor wont there sound
His merry oaten pipe; but shunn'd th' unlucky
ground.

But this good Knight, soon as he them gan spy,
For the cool shade him thither hast'ly got;
For golden Phoebus, now y-mounted high,
From fiery wheels of his fair chariot
Hurl'd his beam so scorching cruel hot,
That living creature might it not abide;
And his new lady it endur'd not.
There they alight, in hope themselves to hide
From the fierce heat, and rest their weary limbs
a tide.⁷

Fair-seemly pleasance⁸ each to other makes,
With goodly purposes,⁹ there as they sit;
And in his fals'd¹⁰ fancy he her takes
To be the fairest wight that liv'd yet;
Which to express, he bends his gentle wit;
And, thinking of those branches green to frame
A garland for her dainty forehead fit,
He pluck'd a bough; out of whose rift¹¹ there
came
Small drops of gory blood, that trickled down
the same.

Therewith a piteous yelling voice was heard,
Crying, "O spare with guilty hands to tear
My tender sides in this rough rind embarr'd;¹²
But fly, ah! fly far hence away, for fear
Lest to you hap what happen'd to me here,
And to this wretched lady, my dear love;
O too dear love, love bought with death too dear!"

1 Faithful.

2 Emotion.

4 Countenance.

6 Afraid.

8 Pleasure.

10 Deceived.

12 Imprisoned.

3 Pity.

5 Rareness maketh dearness.

7 While.

9 Discourses; French, "propos."

11 Cleft.

13 Amazed, astounded.

Aston'd¹³ he stood, and up his hair did hove;¹⁴
And with that sudden horror could no member
move.

At last, when as the dreadful passion¹⁵
Was overpast, and manhood well awake,
Yet musing at the strange occasion,¹⁶
And doubting much his sense, he thus bespake;
"What voice of damn'd ghost from Limbo Lake,
Or guileful sprite wand'ring in empty air
(Both which frail men do oftentimes mistake),
Sends to my doubtful ears these speeches rare,¹⁷
And rueful¹⁸ complaints, me bidding guiltless blood
to spare?"

Then groaning deep; "Nor damn'd ghost,"
quoth he,
"Nor guileful sprite, to thee these words
doth speak;

But once a man, Fradubio,¹⁹ now a tree;
Wretched man, wretched tree! whose nature
weak

A cruel witch, her curs'd will to wreak,
Hath thus transform'd, and plac'd in open plains,
Where Boreas doth blow full bitter bleak,
And scorching sun does dry my secret veins;
For though a tree I seem, yet cold and heat me
pains."

"Say on, Fradubio, then, or man or tree,"
Quoth then the Knight; "by whose mis-
chievous arts

Art thou misshap'd thus, as now I see?
He oft finds med'cine who his grief imparts;
But double griefs afflict concealing hearts,
As raging flames who striveth to suppress."
"The author then," said he, "of all my smart,
Is one Duessa,²⁰ a false sorceress,
That many errant knights hath brought to
wretchedness.

"In prime of youthly years, when courage hot
The fire of love and joy of chivalry
First kindled in my breast, it was my lot
To love this gentle lady, whom ye see
Now not a lady, but a seeming tree;
With whom as once I rode accompanied,
Me chanc'd of a knight encounter'd be,
That had a like fair lady by his side;
Like a fair lady, but did foul Duessa hide;
"Whose forg'd²¹ beauty he did take in hand
All other dames to have exceeded far;
I in defence of mine did likewise stand,
Mine, that did then shine as the morning star.
So both to battle fierce arrang'd are:
In which his harder fortune was to fall
Under my spear; such is the die²² of war.
His lady, left as a prize martial,²³
Did yield her comely person to be at my call.²⁴

"So doubly lov'd of ladies unlike fair,
Th' one seeming such, the other such indeed,
One day in doubt I cast for to compare

14 Heave, stand on end, with dread.

15 Incident.

16 Pitiful.

17 Strange.

18 Doubtful.

19 Duplex, Double-minded. Some commentators have supposed that Spenser here refers to Mary Queen of Scots.

20 False, assumed.

21 Lot, decision.

22 Prize of war.

23 Will.

Whether in beauty's glory did exceed ;
A rosy garland was the victor's meed.
Both seem'd to win, and both seem'd won to be ;
So hard the discord was to be agreed.
Friselissa¹ was as fair as fair might be,
And ever false Duessa seem'd as fair as she.

"The wicked witch, now seeing all this while
The doubtful balance equally to sway,
What not by right she cast² to win by guile ;
And, by her hellish science, rais'd straightway
A foggy mist that overcast the day,
And a dull blast that, breathing on her face,
Dimm'd her former beauty's shining ray,
And with foul ugly form did her disgrace :
Then was she fair alone, when none was fair in
place.³

"Then cried she out, 'Fy, fy, deform'd wight,
Whose borrow'd beauty now appeareth plain
To have before bewitch'd all men's sight :
O leave her soon, or let her soon be slain !'
Her loathly visage viewing with disdain,
Eftsoons⁴ I thought her such as she me told,
And would have kill'd her ; but with feign'd pain
The false witch did my wrathful hand withhold :
So left her, where she now is turn'd to treën
mould.⁵

"Thenceforth I took Duessa for my dame,
And in the witch, unweeing,⁶ joy'd long time ;
Nor ever wist but that she was the same :
Till on a day (that day is ev'ry prime,⁷
When witches wont do penance for their crime),
I chanc'd to see her in her proper hue,
Bathing herself in origan⁸ and thyme :
A filthy foul old woman I did view,
That ever to have touch'd her I did deadly rue.

"Her nether parts, misshapen, monstrous,
Were hid in water, that I could not see ;
But they did seem more foul and hideous
Than woman's shape man would believe to be.
Thenceforth from her most beastly company
I gan refrain, in mind to slip away,
Soon as appear'd safe opportunity ;
For danger great, if not assur'd decay,⁹
I saw before mine eyes, if I were known to
stray.

"The devilish hag, by changes of my cheer,¹⁰
Perceiv'd my thought ; and, drown'd in sleepy
night,
With wicked herbs and ointments did besmear
My body, all through charms and magic might,
That all my senses were bereav'd quite :
Then brought she me into this desert waste,
And by my wretched lover's side me pight ;¹¹
Where now enclos'd in wooden walls full fast,
Banish'd from living wights, our weary days
we waste."

"But how long time," said then the Elfin Knight,
"Are you in this misform'd house to dwell ?"

1 Frail.

2 In the place, beside her.

3 Immediately.

4 Unsuspecting.

5 Wild or bastard marjoram.

6 Demeanour

7 Planned, sought."

8 Shape of a tree.

9 Spring.

10 Certain ruin.

11 Fixed, pitched.

"We may not change," quoth he, "this evil
plight,
Till we be bath'd in a living well :
That is the term prescrib'd by the spell."
"O how," said he, "might I that well out find,
That may restore you to your wonted well ?"¹²
"Time and suffic'd¹³ fates to former kind¹⁴
Shall us restore ; none else from hence may us
unbind."

The false Duessa, now Fidessa hight,¹⁵
Heard how in vain Fradubio did lament,
And knew well all was true. But the good
Knight,
Full of sad fear and ghastly dreariment,¹⁶
When all this speech the living tree had spent,
The bleeding bough did thrust into the ground,
That from the blood he might be innocent,
And with fresh clay did close the wooden wound :
Then, turning to his lady, dead with fear her
found.

Her seeming dead he found with feign'd fear,
As all unweeing¹⁷ of that¹⁸ well she knew ;
And pain'd himself with busy care to rear
Her out of careless swoon. Her eyelids blue,
And dimm'd sight with pale and deadly hue,
At last she up gan lift ; with trembling cheer
Her up he took (too simple and too true),
And oft her kiss'd. At length, all pass'd fear,
He set her on her steed, and forward forth did
bear.

CANTO III.

*Forsaken Truth long seeks her Love,
And makes the lion mild ;
Mars blind Devotion's mart, and falls
In hand of lechour wild.¹⁹*

NAUGHT is there under heav'n's wide hollowness
That moves more dear compassion of mind,
Than beauty brought t' unworthy wretchedness
Through envy's snares, or fortune's freaks unkind.
I, whether lately through her brightness blind,
Or through allegiance, and fast fealty,
Which I do owe unto all womankind,
Feel my heart pierc'd with so great agony,
When such I see, that all for pity I could die.

And now it is empassion'd²⁰ so deep
For fairest Una's sake, of whom I sing,
That my frail eyes these lines with tears do steep,
To think how she, through guileful handeling,
Though true as touch,²¹ though daughter of a king,
Though fair as ever living wight was fair,
Though nor in word nor deed ill meriting,
Is from her Knight divorc'd in despair,
And her due loves deriv'd²² to that vile witch's
share.

12 Welfare, weal.

13 Nature.

14 Sorrow, terror.

15 That which.

16 Moved.

17 Drawn away.

18 Fulfilled, satisfied.

19 Called.

20 Ignorant.

21 Vile.

22 The touchstone.

Yet she, most faithful Lady, all this while,
 Forsaken, woeful, solitary maid,
 Far from all people's press, as in exile,
 In wilderness and wasteful deserts stray'd,
 To seek her Knight ; who, subtilly betray'd
 Through that late vision which th' Enchanter
 wrought,
 Had her abandon'd : she, of naught affray'd,
 Through woods and wateness wide him daily
 sought ;
 Yet wish'd tidings none of him unto her brought.

One day, nigh weary of the irksome¹ way,
 From her unhasty² beast she did alight ;
 And on the grass her dainty limbs did lay
 In secret shadow, far from all men's sight ;
 From her fair head her fillet she undight,³
 And laid her stole⁴ aside : Her angel's face
 As the great eye of heaven shin'd bright,
 And made a sunshine in the shady place ;
 Did never mortal eye behold such heav'nly
 grace.

It fortun'd,⁵ out of the thickest wood
 A ramping⁶ lion rush'd suddenly,
 Hunting full greedy after salvage blood :⁷
 Soon as the royal Virgin he did spy,
 With gaping mouth at her ran greedily,
 To have at once devour'd her tender corse :
 But to the prey when as he drew more nigh,
 His bloody rage assuag'd with remorse,⁸
 And, with the sight amaz'd, forgot his furious
 force.

Instead thereof he kiss'd her weary feet,
 And lick'd her lily hands with fawning tongue,
 As⁹ he her wrong'd innocence did weet.¹⁰
 O how can beauty master the most strong,
 And simple truth subdue avenging wrong !
 Whose yielded pride and proud submission,
 Still dreading death, when she had mark'd long,
 Her heart gan melt in great compassion ;
 And drizzling tears did shed for pure affection.

"The lion, lord of every beast in field,"
 Quoth she, "his princely puissance doth abate,
 And mighty proud to humble weak does yield,
 Forgetful of the hungry rage, which late
 Him prick'd, in pity of my sad estate :
 But he, my lion, and my noble lord,
 How does he find in cruel heart to hate
 Her that him lov'd, and ever most ador'd
 As the god of my life ? why hath he me ab-
 horr'd ?"

Redounding tears did choke th' end of her plaint,
 Which softly echo'd from the neighbour wood ;
 And, sad to see her sorrowful constraint,
 The kingly beast upon her gazing stood ;
 With pity calm'd, down fell his angry mood.
 At last, in close heart shutting up her pain,
 Arose the Virgin born of heav'nly brood,¹¹
 And to her snowy palfrey got again,
 To seek her stray'd champion if she might
 attain.

¹ Fatiguing.² Tardy.⁴ Robe.⁶ Springing.³ Undid, unbound.⁵ Chanced.⁷ Blood of wild animals.

The lion would not leave her desolate,
 But with her went along, as a strong guard
 Of her chaste person, and a faithful mate
 Of her sad troubles and misfortunes hard :
 Still, when she slept, he kept both watch and
 ward ;

And, when she wak'd, he waited diligent,
 With humble service to her will prepar'd :
 From her fair eyes he took commandment,
 And ever by her looks conceiv'd her intent.

Long she thus travell'd through deserts wide,
 By which she thought her wand'ring Knight
 should pass,

Yet never show of living wight espied ;
 Till that at length she found the trodden grass,
 In which the track of people's footing was,
 Under the steep foot of a mountain hoar :
 The same she follows, till at last she has
 A damsel spied slow-footing¹² her before,
 That on her shoulders sad¹³ a pot of water bore.

To whom approaching she to her gan call,
 To weet¹⁰ if dwelling place were nigh at hand ;
 But the rude wench her answer'd not at all ;
 She could not hear, nor speak, nor understand :
 Till, seeing by her side the lion stand,
 With sudden fear her pitcher down she threw,
 And fled away : for never in that land
 Face of fair lady she before did view,
 And that dread lion's look her cast in deadly hue.

Full fast she fled, nor ever look'd behind,
 As if her life upon the wager lay ;
 And home she came, where as her mother blind
 Sat in eternal night ; naught could she say ;
 But, sudden catching hold, did her dismay
 With quaking hands, and other signs of fear ;
 Who, full of ghastly fright and cold affray,¹⁴
 Gan shut the door. By this arriv'd there
 Dame Una, weary dame, and entrance did
 requere :

Which when none yielded, her unruly page
 With his rude claws the wicket open rent,
 And let her in ; where, of his cruel rage
 Nigh dead with fear and faint astonishment,
 She found them both in darksome corner pent ;
 Where that old woman day and night did pray
 Upon her beads, devoutly penitent :
 Nine hundred *Pater nosters* every day,
 And thrice nine hundred *Aves*, she was wont to
 say.

And, to augment her painful penance more,
 Thrice every week in ashes she did sit,
 And next her wrinkled skin rough sackcloth wore,
 And thrice three times did fast from any bit :
 But now for fear her beads she did forget.
 Whose needless dread for to remove away,
 Fair Una fram'd words and countenance fit :
 Which hardly¹⁵ done, at length she gan them
 pray,
 That in their cottage small that night she rest
 her may.

⁸ Pity.¹¹ Race.¹³ Steady.¹⁵ With difficulty.⁹ As if.¹² Walking slowly.¹⁴ Affright.¹⁰ Know.

The day is spent ; and cometh drowsy night,
When every creature shrouded is in sleep :
Sad Una down her lays in weary plight,
And at her feet the lion watch doth keep :
Instead of rest she does lament and weep
For the late loss of her dear-lovèd Knight,
And sighs, and groans, and evermore does steep
Her tender breast in bitter tears all night ;
All night she thinks too long, and often looks
for light.

Now when Aldeboran was mounted high
Above the shiny Cassiopeia's chair,
And all in deadly sleep did drownèd lie,
One knockèd at the door, and in would fare ;¹
He knockèd fast, and often curs'd and sware,
That ready entrance was not at his call ;
For on his back a heavy load he bare
Of nightly stealths, and pillage several,²
Which he had got abroad by purchase criminal.³
He was, to wit,⁴ a stout and sturdy thief,
Wont to rob churches of their ornaments,
And poor men's boxes of their due relief,
Which given was to them for good intents :
The holy saints of their rich vestiments
He did disrobe, when all men careless slept ;
And spoil'd the priests of their habiliments ;
While none the holy things in safety kept,
Then he by cunning sleights in at the window
crept.

And all that he by right or wrong could find,
Unto this house he brought, and did bestow
Upon the daughter of this woman blind,
Abessa,⁵ daughter of Corceca⁶ slow,
With whom he whoredom us'd that few did know,
And fed her fat with feast of offerings,
And plenty, which in all the land did grow ;
Nor sparèd he to give her gold and rings :
And now he to her brought part of his stolen
things.

Thus long the door with rage and threats he bet ;⁷
Yet of those fearful women none durst rise
(The lion frayèd⁸ them), him in to let ;
He would no longer stay him to advise,⁹
But open breaks the door in furious wise,
And ent'ring is ; when that disdainful beast,
Encount'ring fierce, him sudden doth surprise ;
And, seizing cruel claws on trembling breast,
Under his lordly foot him proudly hath suppress.

Him booteth¹⁰ not resist, nor succour call ;
His bleeding heart is in the venger's hand ;
Who straight him rent in thousand pieces small,
And quite dismember'd hath : the thirsty land
Drank up his life ; his corse left on the strand.
His fearful friends wear out the woeful night,
Nor dare to weep, nor seem to understand
The heavy hap, which on them is alight ;
Afraid, lest to themselves the like mishappen
might.¹¹

¹ Come.² Various plunder.³ Indeed, in truth.⁴ Superstition, or Blind Devotion ; she represents the
Romish religion.⁵ Terrified.⁶ Consider.⁷ The like misfortune might happen.⁸ Exceeding.⁹ By robbery.¹⁰ Ignorance.¹¹ Beat.¹² Availeth.¹³ Ulysses.

Now when broad day the world discover'd has,
Up Una rose, up rose the lion eke ;
And on their former journey forward pass,
In ways unknown, her wand'ring Knight to seek,
With pains forpassing¹² that long-wand'ring
Greek,¹³

That for his love refusèd deity :¹⁴
Such were the labours of this Lady meek,
Still seeking him that from her still did fly ;
Then farthest from her hope, when most she
weenèd¹⁵ nigh.

Soon as she parted thence, the fearful twain,
That blind old woman and her daughter dear,
Came forth ; and, finding Kirkrapine¹⁶ therealain,
For anguish great they gan to rend their hair,
And beat their breasts, and naked flesh to tear :
And when they both had wept and wail'd their fill,
Then forth they ran, like two amazèd¹⁷ deer,
Half mad through malice and revenging will,
To follow her that was the causer of their ill :

Whom overtaking, they gan loudly bray,
With hollow howling and lamenting cry ;
Shamefully at her railing all the way,
And her accusing of dishonesty,
That was the flow'r of faith and chastity :
And still amidst her railing she did pray
That plagues, and mischiefs, and long misery,
Might fall on her, and follow all the way ;
And that in endless error she might ever stray.

But when she saw her prayers naught prevail,
She back returnèd with some labour lost ;
And in the way, as she did weep and wail,
A knight her met in mighty arms embost,¹⁸
Yet knight was not, for all his bragging boast ;
But subtle Archimage, that Una sought
By trains¹⁹ into new troubles to have tost :
Of that old woman tidings he besought,
If that of such a lady she could tellen aught.

Therewith she gan her passion to renew,
And cry, and curse, and rail, and rend her hair,
Saying, that harlot she too lately knew,
That caus'd her shed so many a bitter tear ;
And so forth told the story of her fear.
Much seemèd he to moan her hapless chance,
And after for that Lady did inquire ;
Which being taught, he forward gan advance
His fair enchanted steed, and eke his charmèd
lance.

Ere long he came where Una travell'd slow,
And that wild champion waiting her beside ;
Whom seeing such, for dread he durst not show
Himself too nigh at hand, but turnèd wide
Unto a hill ; from whence when she him spied,
By his like-seeming shield, her Knight by name
She ween'd²⁰ it was, and toward him gan ride :
Approaching nigh she wist²¹ it was the same ;
And with fair fearful humbles toward him she
came :

¹² Offered to him by the goddess Calypso, if he would
stay with her in her isle, and think no more of
Penelope.¹³ Thought.¹⁴ The Robber of the Church, Sacrilege.¹⁵ Startled, bewildered.¹⁶ Stratagems.¹⁷ Believed ; was certain.¹⁸ Glad, enclosed.¹⁹ Fancied.

And weeping said, "Ah! my long-lack'd Lord,
Where have ye been thus long out of my sight?
Much fear'd I to have been quite abhorr'd,
Or aught have done that ye displeas'd might;
That should as death unto my dear heart light:¹
For since mine eye your joyous sight did miss,
My cheerful day is turn'd to cheerless night,
And eke my night of death the shadow is:
But welcome now, my light, and shining lamp
of bliss!"

He thereto meeting said, "My dearest Dame,
Far be it from your thought, and from my will,
To think that knighthood I so much should shame,
As you to leave that have me lov'd still,
And chose in Faery Court, of mere goodwill,
Where noblest knights were to be found on earth.
The earth shall sooner leave her kindly² skill
To bring forth fruit, and make eternal dearth,
Than I leave you, my life,³ y-born of heavenly
birth.

"And sooth to say, why I left you so long,
Was for to seek adventure in strange place;
Where," Archimago said, "a felon strong
To many knights did daily work disgrace;
But knight he now shall never more deface:⁴
Good cause of mine excuse that must ye please
Well to accept, and evermore embrace
My faithful service, that by land and seas
Have vow'd you to defend: now then your
plaint appease."

His lovely⁵ words her seem'd due recompense
Of all her pass'd pains: one loving hour
For many years of sorrow can dispense;⁶
A dram of sweet is worth a pound of sour.
She has forgot how many a woeful stowre⁷
For him she late endur'd; she speaks no more
Of past: true is, that true love hath no pow'r
To looken back; his eyes be fix'd before.
Before her stands her Knight, for whom she
toil'd so sore.

Much like as when the beaten marinere,
That long hath wander'd in the ocean wide,
Oft sous'd⁸ in swelling Tethys' saltish tear;
And long time having tann'd his tawny hide
With blustering breath of heav'n, that none
can bide,

And scorching flames of fierce Orion's hound;⁹
Soon as the port from far he has espied,
His cheerful whistle merrily doth sound,
And Nereus crowns with cups; his mates him
pledge around:

Such joy made Una when her Knight she found;
And eke th' Enchanter joyous seem'd no less
Than the glad merchant, that does view from
ground

His ship far come from watery wilderness;
He hurls out vows, and Neptune oft doth bless.
So forth they pass'd; and all the way they spent
Discourning of her dreadful late distress,

¹ Would fall like death upon my heart, to which you
are so dear.

² Natural.

⁴ Destroy.

⁷ Misfortune.

⁵ Loving.

³ Love.

⁶ Make amends.

⁸ Plunged, tossed.

In which he ask'd her, what the lion meant;
Who told her all that fell,¹⁰ in journey as she
went.

They had not ridden far, when they might see
One pricking toward them with hasty heat,
Full strongly arm'd, and on a courser free,
That through his fierceness foam'd all with sweat,
And the sharp iron did for anger eat,
When his hot rider spur'd his chaf'd side;
His look was stern, and seem'd still to threat
Cruel revenge, which he in heart did hide;
And on his shield *Sans loy*¹¹ in bloody lines was
dy'd.

When nigh he drew unto this gentle pair,
And saw the red cross, which the knight did bear,
He burn'd in ire; and gan eftsoons¹² prepare
Himself to battle with his couch'd spear.
Loth was that other, and did faint through fear,
To taste the untried dint of deadly steel:
But yet his Lady did so well him cheer,
That hope of new good hap he gan to feel;
So bent his spear, and spur'd his horse with
iron heel.

But that proud Paynim forward came so fierce
And full of wrath, that, with his sharp-head
spear,
Through vainly cross'd¹³ shield he quite did
pierce;
And, had his stagg'ring steed not shrunk for fear,
Through shield and body eke he should him bear:
Yet so great was the puissance¹⁴ of his push,
That from his saddle quite he did him bear:
He tumbling rudely down to ground did rush,
And from his gor'd wound a well of blood did
gush.

Dismounting lightly from his lofty steed,
He to him leapt, in mind to reave¹⁵ his life,
And proudly said; "Lo, there the worthy meed
Of him that slew Sansfoy with bloody knife:
Henceforth his ghost, freed from repining strife,
In peace may passen over Lethe Lake;
When mourning altars, purg'd with enemy's life,
The black infernal Furies do awake:¹⁶
Life from Sansfoy thou took'st, Sansloy shall
from thee take."

Therewith in haste his helmet gan unlace,
Till Una cried, "O hold that heavy hand,
Dear Sir, whatever that thou be in place!¹⁷
Enough is, that thy foe doth vanquish'd stand
Now at thy mercy; mercy not withstand;
For he is one the truest knight alive,
Though conquer'd now he lie on lowly land;
And, whilst him fortune favour'd, fair did thrive
In bloody field; therefore of life him not deprive."

Her piteous words might not abate his rage;
But, rudely rending up his helmet, would
Have slain him straight: but when he sees his age,
And hoary head of Archimago old,
His hasty hand he doth amaz'd hold,

⁹ The Dog-star.

¹¹ Without Law.

¹³ Marked with the cross.

¹⁵ Bereave, take away.

¹⁷ Whoever you may be.

¹⁰ All that befell her.

¹² Immediately.

¹⁴ Power.

¹⁶ Appease.

And, half asham'd, wonder'd at the sight :
For that old man well knew he, though untold,
In charms and magic to have wondrous might ;
Nor ever wont in field, nor in round lists, to fight :

And said, " Why, Archimago, luckless Sire !
What do I see ? what hard mishap is this
That hath thee hither brought to taste mine ire ?
Or thine the fault, or mine the error is,
Instead of foe to wound my friend amiss ? "
He answer'd naught, but in a trance still lay,
And on those guileful daz'd¹ eyes of his
The cloud of death did sit ; which done away,²
He left him lying so, nor would no longer stay :

But to the Virgin comes, who all this while
Amaz'd stands, herself so mock'd to see
By him who has the guerdon³ of his guile,
For so misfeigning her true Knight to be :
Yet is she now in more perplexity,
Left in the hand of that same Paynim⁴ bold,
From whom her booteth not⁵ at all to fly :
Who, by her cleanly garment catching hold,
Her from her palfrey pluck'd, her visage to be-
hold.

But her fierce servant, full of kingly awe
And high disdain, when as his sov'reign dame
So rudely handled by her foe he saw,
With gaping jaws full greedy at him came,
And, ramping⁶ on his shield, did ween⁷ the
same

Have reft away with his sharp rending claws :
But he was stout, and lust did now inflame
His courage more, that from his griping paws
He hath his shield redeem'd ; and forth his
sword he draws.

O, then too weak and feeble was the force
Of salvage beast, his puissance to withstand !
For he was strong, and of so mighty corse,⁸
As ever wielded spear in warlike hand ;
And feats of arms did wisely understand.
Eftsoons⁹ he pierc'd through his chaf'd chest
With thrilling point of deadly iron brand,
And lanc'd his lordly heart : with death oppress
He roar'd aloud, while life forsook his stubborn
breast.

Who now is left to keep the f'rlorn maid
From raging spoil of lawless victor's will ?
Her faithful guard remov'd ; her hope dismay'd ;
Herself a yielded prey to save or spill !¹⁰
He now, lord of the field, his pride to fill,
With foul reproaches and disdainful spite
Her vilely entertains ; and, will or nill,¹¹
Bears her away upon his courser light :
Her prayers naught prevail ; his rage is more of
might.

And, all the way, with great lamenting pain
And piteous plaints she filleth his dull ears,
That stony heart could riven have in twain ;
And all the way she wets with flowing tears ;
But he, enrag'd with rancour, nothing hears.

¹ Dimmed.

² Having passed off.

³ Infidel, Saracen.

⁴ It avaleth her not.

⁵ Springing.

⁶ Bodily frame.

⁷ Reward.

⁸ Think.

⁹ Immediately.

Her servile beast¹² yet would not leave her so,
But follows her far off, nor aught he fears
To be partaker of her wand'ring woe.
More mild in beastly kind,¹³ than that her
beastly foe.

CANTO IV.

*To sinful House of Pride Duessa-
a guides the faithful Knight ;
Where, brother's death to wreak, Sansjoy
Doth challenge him to fight.*

YOUNG knight whatever, that dost arms profess,
And through long labours hunttest after fame,
Beware of fraud, beware of fickleness,
In choice, and change, of thy dear-lov'd dame ;
Lest thou of her believe too lightly blame,
And rash misweening¹⁴ do thy heart remove :
For unto knight there is no greater shame
Than lightness and inconstancy in love :
That doth this Redcross Knight's ensample
plainly prove.

Who, after that he had fair Una lorn,¹⁵
Through light misdeeming of her loyalty ;
And false Duessa in her stead had borne,
Call'd Fidessa, and so suppos'd to be ;
Long with her travell'd ; till at last they see
A goodly building, bravely garnish'd ;
The house of mighty prince it seem'd to be ;
And toward it a broad highway that led,
All bare through people's feet which thither
travell'd.

Great troops of people travell'd thitherward,
Both day and night, of each degree and place ;
But few return'd, having scap'd hard¹⁶
With baleful beggary or foul disgrace ;
Which ever after in most wretched case,
Like loathsome lazars,¹⁷ by the hedges lay.
Thither Duessa bade him bend his pace ;
For she is weary of the toilsome way ;
And also nigh consum'd is the lingering day.

A stately palace built of squar'd brick,
Which cunningly was without mortar laid,
Whose walls were high, but nothing strong nor
thick,
And golden foil¹⁸ all over them display'd,
That purest sky with brightness they dismay'd ;
High lifted up were many lofty tow'rs,
And goodly galleries far over laid,
Full of fair windows and delightful bow'rs ;¹⁹
And on the top a dial told the timely hours.

It was a goodly heap for to behold,
And spake the praises of the workman's wit ;
But full great pity, that so fair a mould
Did on so weak foundation ever sit :
For on a sandy hill, that still did flit²⁰
And fall away, it mounted was full high,
That every breath of heaven shak'd it ;

¹⁰ Destroy.

¹¹ Her obedient ass.

¹² Misjudgment.

¹³ Escaped with difficulty.

¹⁴ Gold leaf.

¹⁵ Shift.

¹⁶ Will she or will she not.

¹⁷ Nature.

¹⁸ Deserted, lost.

¹⁹ Lepers.

²⁰ Chambers.

And all the hinder parts, that few could spy,
Were ruinous and old, but painted cunningly.

Arriv'd there, they pass'd in forthright;¹
For still to all the gates stood open wide:
Yet charge of them was to a porter hight,²
Call'd Malventu, who entrance none denied:
Thence to the hall, which was on every side
With rich array and costly arras dight:³
Infinite sorts of people did abide
There waiting long, to win the wish'd sight
Of her that was the lady of that palace bright.

By them they pass, all gazing on them round,
And to the presence⁴ mount; whose glorious
view

Their frail amaz'd senses did confound.
In living prince's court none ever knew
Such endless riches, and so sumptuous shew:
Not Persia's self, the nurse of pompous pride,
Like ever saw: and there a noble crew
Of lords and ladies stood on ev'ry side,
Which with their presence fair the place much
beautified.

High above all a cloth of state was spread,
And a rich throne, as bright as sunny day;
On which there sat, most brave embellish'd
With royal robes and gorgeous array,
A maiden queen, that shone as Titan's ray⁵
In glist'ring gold and peerless precious stone;
Yet her bright blazing beauty did assay⁶
To dim the brightness of her glorious throne,
As envying herself, that too exceeding shone:

Exceeding shone, like Phoebus' fairest child,⁷
That did presume his father's fiery wain,
And flaming mouths of steeds unwonted wild,
Through highest heav'n with weaker hand to rein;
Proud of such glory and advancement vain,
While flashing beams do daze⁸ his feeble eyen,
He leaves the welkin⁹ way most beaten plain,
And, wrapp'd with whirling wheels, inflames the
skien

With fire not made to burn, but fairly for to shine.

So proud she shin'd in her princely state,
Looking to heav'n; for earth she did disdain:
And sitting high; for lowly she did hate:
Lo, underneath her scornful feet was lain
A dreadful dragon with a hideous train;¹⁰
And in her hand she held a mirror bright,
Wherein her face she often view'd fain,¹¹
And in her self-lov'd semblance took delight;
For she was wondrous fair, as any living wight.

Of grialy Pluto she the daughter was,
And sad Proserpina, the queen of hell;
Yet did she think her peerless worth to pass
That parentage, with pride so did she swell;
And thund'ring Jove, that high in heaven doth
dwell

And wield the world, she claim'd for her sire;
Or if that any else did Jove excel;

¹ Directly.

² Decked.

³ Like the sun.

⁴ Phaethon.

⁵ Heavenly.

⁶ With pleasure.

⁷ Entrusted.

⁸ Presence-chamber.

⁹ Attempt.

¹⁰ Dazzle, dim.

¹¹ Tall.

For to the highest she did still aspire;
Or, if aught higher were than that, did it desire.

And proud Lucifera men did her call,
That made herself a queen, and crown'd to be;
Yet rightful kingdom she had none at all,
Nor heritage of native sov'reignty;
But did usurp with wrong and tyranny
Upon the sceptre which she now did hold:
Nor rul'd her realm with laws, but policy,
And strong advisement¹² of six wizards old,
That with their counsels bad her kingdom did
uphold.

Soon as the Elfin Knight in presence came,
And false Dueessa, seeming lady fair,
A gentle usher, Vanity by name,
Made room, and passage for them did prepare:
So goodly brought them to the lowest stair¹³
Of her high throne; where they, on humble knees
Making obeisance, did the cause declare
Why they were come her royal state to see,
To prove the wide report of her great majesty.

With lofty eyes, half loth to look so low,
She thank'd them in her disdainful wise;
Nor other grace vouchsaf'd them to show
Of princess worthy; scarce them bade arise.
Her lords and ladies all this while devise
Themselves to setten forth to stranger's sight:
Some frounce¹⁴ their curl'd hair in courtly guise;
Some prank¹⁵ their ruffs; and others trimly
dight¹⁶

Their gay attire: each other's greater pride does
spite.

Goodly they all that Knight do entertain,
Right glad with him to have increas'd their crew;
But to Duess' each one himself did pain¹⁷
All kindness and fair courtesy to show;
For in that court whilom¹⁸ her well they knew:
Yet the stout Faery mongst the middest crowd
Thought all their glory vain in knightly view,
And that great princess too exceeding proud,
That to strange knight no better countenance
allow'd.

Sudden upriseth from her stately place
The royal dame, and for her coach doth call:
All hurtle forth;¹⁹ and she, with princely pace,
As fair Aurora, in her purple pall,
Out of the east the dawning day doth call,
So forth she comes; her brightness broad doth
blaze.

The heaps of people, thronging in the hall,
Do ride each other,²⁰ upon her to gaze:
Her glorious glitt'ring light doth all men's eyes
amaze.

So forth she comes, and to her coach does climb,
Adorn'd all with gold and garlands gay,
That seem'd as fresh as Flora in her prime,
And strove to match, in royal rich array,
Great Juno's golden chair;²¹ the which, they say,
The gods stand gazing on, when she does ride

¹² Counselling.

¹³ Step.

¹⁴ Plait.

¹⁵ Adjust ostentatiously.

¹⁶ Arrange.

¹⁷ Exert.

¹⁸ Of former days.

¹⁹ Rush forth in a jostling crowd.

²⁰ Crowd and strain to peer over each other's heads.

²¹ Chariot.

To Jove's high house through heav'n's brass-
pavèd way,

Drawn of fair peacocks, that excel in pride,
And full of Argus' eyes their tails dispreaden wide.

But this¹ was drawn of six unequal beasts,
On which her six sage councillors did ride,
Taught to obey their bestial behests,
With like conditions to their kinds applied :
Of which the first, that all the rest did guide,
Was sluggish Idleness, the nurse of sin ;
Upon a slothful ass he chose to ride,
Array'd in habit black, and amice² thin ;
Like to a holy monk, the service to begin.

And in his hand his portess³ still he bare,
That much was worn, but therein little read ;
For of devotion he had little care,
Still drown'd in sleep, and most of his days dead :
Scarce could he once uphold his heavy head,
To looken whether it were night or day.
May seem the wain⁴ was very evil led,
When such an one had guiding of the way,
That knew not whether right he went or else
astray.

From worldly cares himself he did esloyne,⁵
And greatly shunnèd manly exercise ;
From every work he challengèd essoyne,⁶
For contemplation sake : yet otherwise
His life he led in lawless riotise ;⁷
By which he grew to grievous malady :⁸
For in his lustless⁹ limbs, through evil guise,
A shaking fever reign'd continually :
Such one was Idleness, first of this company.

And by his side rode loathsome Gluttony,
Deformèd creature, on a filthy swine ;
His belly was upblown with luxury,
And eke with fatness swollen were his eyne ;
And like a crane his neck was long and fine,
With which he swallow'd up excessive feast,
For want whereof poor people oft did pine :
And all the way, most like a brutish beast,
He spuèd up his gorge,¹⁰ that all did him detest.

In green vine leaves he was right fitly clad ;
For other clothes he could not wear for heat :
And on his head an ivy garland had,
From under which fast trickled down the sweat :
Still as he rode, he somewhat still did eat,
And in his hand did bear a boozing can,¹¹
Of which he supp'd so oft, that on his seat
His drunken corse he scarce upholden can :
In shape and life more like a monster than a man.

Unfit he was for any worldly thing,
And eke unable once to stir or go ;
Not meet to be of counsel to a king,
Whose mind in meat and drink was drownèd so,
That from his friend he seldom knew his foe :
Full of diseases was his carcase blue,
And a dry dropsy through his flesh did flow,

¹ Lucifer's car. The Princess and her councillors are the seven cardinal sins, the principal and root of which, as the Parson in the Canterbury Tales has said, is Pride. See page 193.

² Breviary.

³ Withdraw ; French, "gloigner."

⁴ Excuse, exoneration ; French, "essoine" or "ex-
oine."

⁷ Riot.

⁸ Robe.

⁹ Chariot.

Which by misdiet daily greater grew ;
Such one was Gluttony, the second of that crew.

And next to him rode lustful Lechery,
Upon a bearded goat, whose rugged hair,
And whally¹² eyes (the sign of jealousy),
Was like the person's self whom he did bear :
Who rough, and black, and filthy, did appear ;
Unseemly man to please fair lady's eye :
Yet he of ladies oft was lovèd dear,
When fairer faces were bid standen by :
O who does know the bent of women's fantasy !

In a green gown he clothèd was full fair,
Which underneath did hide his filthiness ;
And in his hand a burning heart he bare,
Full of vain follies and newfangledness ;
For he was false, and fraught with fickleness ;
And learnèd had to love with secret looks ;
And well could dance ; and sing with ruefulness ;¹³
And fortunes tell ; and read in loving books :
And thousand other ways, to bait his fleshly
hooks.

Inconstant man, that lovèd all he saw,
And lusted after all that he did love ;
Nor would his looser life be tied to law,
But joy'd weak women's hearts to tempt and
prove,

If from their loyal loves he might them move :
Which lewdness fill'd him with reproachful pain
Of that foul evil, which all men reprove,
That rots the marrow and consumes the brain :
Such one was Lechery, the third of all this train.

And greedy Avarice by him did ride,
Upon a camel loaded all with gold :
Two iron coffers hung on either side,
With precious metal full as they might hold ;
And in his lap a heap of coin he told ;
For of his wicked pelf his god he made,
And unto hell himself for money sold ;
Accursèd usury was all his trade ;
And right and wrong alike in equal balance
weigh'd.

His life was nigh unto death's door y-plac'd ;
And thread-bare coat and cobbled shoes he ware ;
Nor scarce good morsel all his life did taste ;
But both from back and belly still did spare
To fill his bags, and riches to compare :¹⁴
Yet child nor kinsman living had he none
To leave them to ; but thorough daily care
To get, and nightly fear to lose, his own,
He led a wretched life, unto himself unknown.
Most wretched wight, whom nothing might suf-
fice ;

Whose greedy lust did lack in greatest store ;
Whose need had end, but no end covetise ;¹⁵
Whose wealth was want ; whose plenty made
him poor ;

Who had enough, yet wishèd ever more :
A vile disease ; and eke in foot and hand

⁸ Sickness.

⁹ Feeble ; opposite of "lusty."

¹⁰ That with which he had gorged himself.

¹¹ A drinking can.

¹² Streaky or greenish-white eyes, like those of a
wall-eyed horse ; Shakespeare uses "wall-eyed" as a
term of reproach.

¹³ Touchingly.

¹⁴ Latin, "comparare," to procure, obtain.

¹⁵ His covetousness.

A grievous gout tormented him full sore ;
That well he could not touch, nor go, nor stand :
Such one was Avarice, the fourth of this fair band.

And next to him malicious Envy rode
Upon a ravenous wolf, and still did chaw
Between his canker'd teeth a venomous toad,
That all the poison ran about his jaw ;
But inwardly he chaw'd his own maw
At neighbour's wealth, that made him ever sad ;
For death it was, when any good he saw ;
And wept, that cause of weeping none he had ;
But when he heard of harm, he wax'd wondrous glad.

All in a kirtle of discolour'd say¹
He cloth'd was, y-painted full of eyes ;
And in his bosom secretly there lay
A hateful snake, the which his tail upties²
In many folds, and mortal sting implies :³
Still as he rode, he gnash'd his teeth to see
Those heaps of gold with griple Covetise ;⁴
And grudg'd at the great felicity
Of proud Lucifera, and his own company.

He hated all good works and virtuous deeds,
And him no less that any like did use ;
And, who with gracious bread the hungry feeds,
His alms for want of faith he doth accuse ;
So ev'ry good to bad he doth abuse :
And eke the verse of famous poets' wit
He does backbite, and spiteful poison spues
From leprous mouth on all that ever writ :
Such one vile Envy was, that fifth in row⁵ did sit.

And him beside rides fierce revenging Wrath,
Upon a lion, loth⁶ for to be led ;
And in his hand a burning brand he hath,
The which he brandisheth about his head :
His eyes did hurl forth sparkles fiery red,
And star'd stern on all that him beheld ;
As ashes pale of hue, and seeming dead ;
And on his dagger still his hand he held,
Trembling through hasty rage, when choler in
him swell'd.

His ruffian raiment all was stain'd with blood
Which he had spilt, and all to rags y-rent ;
Through unadvis'd rashness waxen wood ;⁷
For of his hands he had no government,
Nor car'd for blood in his avengement ;⁸
But when the furious fit was overpast,
His cruel facts⁹ he often would repent ;
Yet, wilful man, he never would forecast
How many mischiefs should ensue¹⁰ his heed-
less haste.

Full many mischiefs follow cruel Wrath ;
Abhorred Bloodshed, and tumultuous Strife,
Unmanly Murder, and unthrifty Scath,¹¹
Bitter Despite, with Rancour's rusty knife ;
And fretting Grief, the enemy of life :
All these, and many evils more, haunt Ire,
The swelling Spleen, and Frenzy raging rife,

¹ Many-coloured silk ; French, "sole."

² Twists or knots up.

³ Contains in the folds.

⁴ In the possession of grasping or tenacious Avarice.

⁵ Order.

⁶ Unwilling.

⁷ Grown mad.

⁸ In revenging himself.

⁹ Deeds.

¹⁰ Result from.

¹¹ Mischiefs.

¹² Procession, row.

The shaking Palsy, and Saint Francis' fire :
Such one was Wrath, the last of this ungodly
tire.¹²

And after all, upon the waggon beam,
Rode Satan with a smarting whip in hand,
With which he forward lash'd the lazy team,
So oft as Sloth still in the mire did stand.
Huge routs¹³ of people did about them band,¹⁴
Shouting for joy ; and still before their way
A foggy mist had cover'd all the land ;
And, underneath their feet, all scatter'd lay
Dead skulls and bones of men, whose life had
gone astray.

So forth they marchen in this goodly sort,
To take the solace of the open air,
And in fresh flow'ring fields themselves to sport :
Amongst the rest rode that false lady fair,
The foul Dueessa, next unto the chair¹⁵
Of proud Lucifer', as one of the train :
But that good Knight would not so nigh repair,
Himself estranging from their joyance vain,
Whose fellowship seem'd far unfit for warlike
swain.

So, having solac'd themselves a space,
With pleasance of the breathing fields y-fed,¹⁶
They back return'd to the princely place ;
Where as an errant knight in arms y-cled,
And heathenish shield, wherein with letters red
Was writ *Sans joy*, they new arriv'd find :
Inflam'd with fury and fierce hardihead,¹⁷
He seem'd in heart to harbour thoughts unkind,¹⁸
And nourish bloody vengeance in his bitter mind.

Who, when the sham'd shield of alain Sansfoy
He spied with that same Faery champion's page,
Betraying him that did of late destroy
His eldest brother ; burning all with rage,
He to him leapt, and that same envious¹⁹ gage
Of victor's glory from him snatch'd away :
But th' Elfin Knight, which ought²⁰ that warlike
wage,²¹

Disdain'd to loose the meed he won in fray ;
And, him encount'ring fierce, rescued the noble
prey.

Therewith they gan to hurtle²² greedily,
Redoubted battle ready to darrain,²³
And clash their shields, and shake their swords
on high,
That with their stowre²⁴ they troubled all the
train :

Till that great queen, upon eternal pain
Of high displeasure that ensuen might,
Commanded them their fury to refrain ;
And, if that either to that shield had right,
In equal lists they should the morrow next it fight.

"Ah, dearest Dame," quoth then the Paynim
bold,

"Pardon the error of enrag'd wight,
Whom great grief made forget the reins to hold

¹³ Crowds.

¹⁴ Gather.

¹⁵ Chariot.

¹⁶ Refreshed, satisfied.

¹⁷ Courage.

¹⁸ Unnatural.

¹⁹ Envy-inspiring.

²⁰ Owned.

²¹ Prize, reward of combat.

²² Rush together.

²³ Wage.

²⁴ Struggle.

Of reason's rule, to see this recreant Knight
(No knight, but traitor full of false despite
And shameful treason), who through guile hath
slain

The prouest ¹ knight that ever field did fight,
Ev'n stout Sansfoy (O who can then refrain?)
Whose shield he bears revers'd, the more to
heap disdain.

"And, to augment the glory of his guile,
His dearest love, the fair Fidessa, lo!
Is there possess'd of the traitor vile;
Who reaps the harvest sown by his foe,
Sown in bloody field, and bought with woe:
That, brother's hand shall dearly well requite,
So be, O Queen, you equal favour show."
Him little answer'd th' angry Elfin Knight;
He never meant with words, but swords, to
plead his right:

But threw his gauntlet, as a sacred pledge
His cause in combat the next day to try:
So be they parted both, with hearts on edge
To be aveng'd each on his enemy.
That night they pass in joy and jollity,
Feasting and courting both in bower and hall;
For steward was excessive Gluttony,
That of his plenty pour'd forth to all:
Which done, the chamberlain Sloth did to rest
them call.

Now when as darksome Night had all display'd
Her coal-black curtain over brightest sky;
The warlike youths, on dainty couches laid,
Did chase away sweet sleep from sluggish eye,
To muse on means of hop'd victory.
But when as Morpheus had with leaden mace
Arrested all that courtly company,
Uprose Duesse from her resting-place,
And to the Paynim's lodging comes with silent
pace:

Whom broad awake she finds, in troublous fit,
Forecasting ² how his foe he might annoy;
And him amoves ³ with speeches seeming fit:
"Ah dear Sansjoy, next dearest to Sansfoy,
Cause of my new grief, cause of my new joy;
Joyous, to see his image in mine eye,
And griev'd, to think how foe did him destroy
That was the flower of grace and chivalry;
Lo, his Fidessa, to thy secret faith I fly."

With gentle words he gan her fairly greet,
And bade say on the secret of her heart:
Then, sighing soft; "I learn that little sweet
Oft temper'd is," quoth she, "with muchel
smart:

For, since my breast was lanc'd with lovely
dart ⁴

Of ⁵ dear Sansfoy, I never joy'd hour,
But in eternal woes my weaker heart

Have wasted, loving him with all my pow'r,
And for his sake have felt full many a heavy
stowre. ⁶

"At last, when perils all I ween'd past,
And hop'd to reap the crop ⁷ of all my care,
Into new woes unweeting ⁸ I was cast
By this false faitour, ⁹ who unworthy ware
His worthy shield, whom he with guileful snare
Entrapp'd slew, and brought to shameful grave:
Me, silly ¹⁰ maid, away with him he bare,
And ever since hath kept in darksome cave,
For that I would not yield what to Sansfoy I
gave.

"But since fair sun hath spers'd ¹¹ that low'ring
cloud,
And to my loath'd life now shows some light,
Under your beams I will me safely shroud ¹²
From dreaded storm of his disdainful spite: ¹³
To you th' inheritance belongs by right
Of brother's praise, to you eke 'longs his love.
Let not his love, let not his restless sprite,
Be unreveng'd, that calls to you above
From wand'ring Stygian shores, where it doth
endless move."

Thereto said he, "Fair Dame, be not dismay'd
For sorrows past; their grief is with them gone.
Nor yet of present peril be afraid:
For needless fear did never vantage none;
And helpless hap ¹⁴ it booteth ¹⁵ not to moan.
Dead is Sansfoy, his vital pains are past,
Though griev'd ghost for vengeance deep do
groan:

He lives, that shall him pay his duties last,
And guilty Elfin blood shall sacrifice in haste."

"O, but I fear the fickle freaks," quoth she,
"Of Fortune false, and odds of arms in field."
"Why, Dame," quoth he, "what odds can ever
be,

Where both do fight alike, to win or yield?"

"Yea, but," quoth she, "he bears a charm'd
shield,

And eke enchanted arms, that none can pierce;
Nor none can wound the man that does them
wield."

"Charm'd or enchanted," answer'd hethen fierce,
"I no whit reck; ¹⁶ nor you the like need to
rehearse.

"But, fair Fidessa, sithens ¹⁷ fortune's guile,
Or enemy's pow'r, hath now captiv'd you,
Return from whence ye came, and rest a while,
Till morrow next, that I the Elf subdue,
And with Sansfoy's dead dowry you endue."

"Ay me, that is a double death," she said,
"With proud foe's sight my sorrow to renew:

Wherever yet I be, my secret aid
Shall follow you." So, passing forth, she him
obey'd.

1 Bravest. 2 Contriving. 3 Incites.
4 Love's dart. 5 By.
6 Trouble, affliction. 7 Harvest, fruit.
8 Unsuspecting. 9 Impostor, deceiver.
10 Innocent.

11 Dispersed, scattered. 13 Wrath.
12 Shelter. 14 Fortune that cannot be remedied.
15 Availeth. 16 Care not a jot.
17 Since.

CANTO V.

*The faithful Knight in equal field
Subdues his faithless foe :
Whom false Duessa saves, and for
His cure to Hell does go.*

THE noble heart that harbours virtuous thought,
And is with child of glorious great intent,
Can never rest until it forth have brought
Th' eternal brood of glory excellent.
Such restless passion did all night torment
The flaming courage of that Faery Knight,
Devising how that doughty tournament
With greatest honour he achieven might :
Still did he wake, and still did watch for dawn-
ing light.

At last the golden oriental gate
Of greatest heaven gan to open fair ;
And Phoebus, fresh as bridegroom to his mate,
Came dancing forth, shaking his dewy hair,
And hurl'd his glist'ring beams through gloomy
air.

Which when the wakeful Elf perceiv'd, straight-
way

He started up, and did himself prepare
In sunbright arms, and battailous¹ array ;
For with that Pagan proud he combat will that
day.

And forth he comes into the common hall ;
Where early wait him many a gazing eye,
To weet² what end to stranger knights may fall.
There many minstrels maken melody,
To drive away the dull melánocholy ;
And many bards, that to the trembling chord
Can tune their timely voices cunningly ;³
And many chroniclers, that can record
Old loves, and wars for ladies done by many a
lord.

Soon after comes the cruel Saracen,
In woven mail all arméd warily ;⁴
And sternly looks at him, who not a pin
Does care for look of living creature's eye.
They bring them wines of Greece and Araby,
And dainty spices fetch'd from farthest Ind,
To kindle heat of courage privily ;
And in the wine a solemn oath they bind
T' observe the sacred laws of arms that are
assign'd.

At last forth comes that far renownéd queen.
With royal pomp and princely majesty
She is y-brought unto a paléd green,⁵
And placéd under stately canopy,
The warlike feats of both those knights to see.
On th' other side, in all men's open view,
Duessa placéd is, and on a tree
Sansfoy his shield is hang'd, with bloody hue :
Both those the laurel garlands to the victor due.

A shrilling trumpet sounded from on high,
And unto battle bade themselves address :

¹ Martial.² Know.³ Skillfully.⁴ Carefully.⁵ A lawn fenced around.⁶ Brandish, move swiftly ; the idea is taken from the motion in making the sign of the cross.

Their shining shields about their wrists they tie,
And burning blades about their heads do bless,⁶
The instruments of wrath and heaviness :
With greedy force each other doth assail,
And strike so fiercely, that they do imprem⁷
Deep dinted furrows in the batter'd mail :
The iron walls to ward their blows are weak and
frail.

The Saracen was stout and wondrous strong,
And heap'd blows like iron hammers great ;
For after blood and vengeance he did long.
The Knight was fierce, and full of youthly heat,
And doubled strokes like dreaded thunder's
threat :

For all for praise and honour did he fight.
Both, stricken, strike ; and beaten, both do beat ;
That from their shields forth fieth fiery light,
And helmets, hewen deep, show marks of either's
might.

So th' one for wrong, the other strives for right :
As when a griffin, seiz'd of⁸ his prey,
A dragon fierce encounters in his flight,
Through widest air making his idle way,
That would his rightful ravin⁹ rend away :
With hideous horror both together smite,
And souse¹⁰ so sore, that they the heav'n's affray :
The wise soothsayer, seeing so sad sight,
Th' amaz'd vulgar tells of wars and mortal fight.

So th' one for wrong, the other strives for right ;
And each to deadly shame would drive his foe :
The cruel steel so greedily doth bite
In tender flesh, that streams of blood down flow ;
With which the arms, that erst¹¹ so bright did
show,

Into a pure vermilion now are dy'd.
Great ruth¹² in all the gazers' hearts did grow,
Seeing the goréd wounds to gape so wide,
That victory they dare not wish to either side.

At last the Paynim chanc'd to cast his eye,
His sudden eye, flaming with wrathful fire,
Upon his brother's shield, which hung thereby :
Therewith redoubled was his raging ire,
And said ; " Ah ! wretched son of woeful sire,
Dost thou sit wailing by black Stygian Lake,
Whilst here thy shield is hang'd for victor's
hire ?¹³

And, sluggish german,¹⁴ do thy forces slake
To after-send his foe, that him may overtake ?

" Go, caitiff Elf, him quickly overtake,
And soon redeem from his long-wand'ring woe :
Go, guilty ghost, to him my message make,
That I his shield have quit¹⁵ from dying foe."
Therewith upon his crest he struck him so,
That twice he reel'd, ready twice to fall :
End of the doubtful battle deem'd tho¹⁶
The lookers on ; and loud to him gan call
The false Duessa, " Thine the shield, and I, and
all !"

Soon as the Faery heard his lady speak,
Out of his swowning¹⁷ dream he gan awake ;

⁷ Imprint.⁸ Which has seized.⁹ Prey.¹⁰ Dash against each other.¹¹ Before.¹² Pity.¹³ Reward.¹⁴ Kinsman, brother.¹⁵ Rescued.¹⁶ Then.¹⁷ Fainting.

And quick'ning faith, that erst was waxen weak,
The creeping deadly cold away did shake :
Then mov'd with wrath, and shame, and lady's
sake,

Of all at once he cast¹ aveng'd to be,
And with exceeding fury at him strake,²
That forc'd him to stoop upon his knee :
Had he not stoop'd so, he should have cloven
be.³

And to him said ; "Go now, proud miscreant,⁴
Thyself thy message do to german dear ;
Alone he, wand'ring, thee too long doth want :
Go, say, his foe thy shield with his doth bear."
Therewith his heavy hand he high gan rear,
Him to have slain ; when lo ! a darksome cloud
Upon him fell ; he nowhere doth appear,
But vanish'd is. The Elf him calls aloud,
But answer none receives ; the darkness him
does shroud.

In haste Duessa from her place arose,
And to him running said ; "O prowest⁵ Knight
That ever lady to her love did choose,
Let now abate the terror of your might,
And quench the flame of furious despite
And bloody vengeance : lo ! th' infernal Pow'rs,
Cov'ring your foe with cloud of deadly night,
Have borne him hence to Pluto's baleful bow'rs :
The conquest yours ; I yours ; the shield and
glory yours !"

Not all so satisfied, with greedy eye
He sought all round about, his thirsty blade
To bathe in blood of faithless enemy,
Who all that while lay hid in secret shade :
He stands amaz'd how he thence should fade.
At last the trumpets triumph sound on high ;
And running heralds humble homage made,
Greeting him goodly with new victory ;
And to him brought the shield, the cause of
enmity.

Wherewith he goeth to that sovereign queen,
And, falling her before on lowly knee,
To her makes present of his service seen :
Which she accepts with thanks and goodly gree,⁶
Greatly advancing⁷ his gay chivalry :
So marcheth home, and by her takes the Knight,
Whom all the people follow with great glee,
Shouting, and clapping all their hands on height,⁸
That all the air it fills, and flies to heaven bright.

Home is he brought, and laid in sumptuous bed :
Where many skilful leeches him abide⁹
To salve his hurts, that yet still freshly bled.
In wine and oil they wash his woundes wide,
And softly gan embalm¹⁰ on every side.
And all the while most heav'nly melody
About the bed sweet music did divide,¹¹
Him to beguile of grief and agony.
And all the while Duessa wept full bitterly.

¹ Resolved.

² Struck.

⁴ Misbeliever, infidel.

⁶ Favour.

⁸ High.

¹⁰ Dress with balm.

¹² Ignorant.

¹³ In the same condition in which she had left him.

³ Been.

⁵ Bravest.

⁷ Extolling.

⁹ Await, attend.

¹¹ Distribute, diffuse.

As when a weary traveller, that strays
By muddy shore of broad sev'n-mouth'd Nile,
Unweeting¹² of the perilous wand'ring ways,
Doth meet a cruel crafty crocodile,
Which, in false grief hiding his harmful guile,
Doth weep full sore, and sheddeth tender tears ;
The foolish man, that pities all the while
His mournful plight, is swallow'd up unwares ;
Forgetful of his own, that minds another's cares.
So wept Duessa until eventide,
That shining lamps in Jove's high house were
light :

Then forth she rose, nor longer would abide ;
But comes unto the place where th' heathen
knight

In slumb'ring swoon, nigh void of vital sprite,
Lay cover'd with enchanted cloud all day :
Whom when she found as she him left in plight,¹³
To wail his woeful case she would not stay,
But to the eastern coast of heav'n makes speedy
way :

Where grisly Night, with visage deadly sad,
That Phoebus' cheerful face durst never view,
And in a foul black pitchy mantle clad,
She finds forth coming from her darksome mew,¹⁴
Where she all day did hide her hated hue.
Before the door her iron chariot stood,
Already harness'd for journey new,
And coal-black steeds y-born of hellish brood,
That on their rusty bits did champ as they were
wood.¹⁵

Who when she saw Duessa, sunny bright,
Adorn'd with gold and jewels shining clear,
She greatly grew amaz'd at the sight,
And th' unacquainted¹⁶ light began to fear
(For never did such brightness there appear) ;
And would have back retir'd to her cave,
Until the witch's speech she gan to hear,
Saying ; "Yet, O thou dreaded Dame, I crave
Abide, till I have told the message which I
have."

She stay'd ; and forth Duessa gan proceed :
"O thou, most ancient grandmother of all,
More old than Jove, whom thou at first didst
breed,

Or that great house of gods celestial ;
Which wast begot in Dæmogorgon's hall,
And saw'st the secrets of the world unmade ;¹⁷
Why suff'rest thou thy nephews¹⁸ dear to fall
With Elfin sword, most shamefully betray'd ?
Lo, where the stout Sansjoy doth sleep in deadly
shade !

"And, him before, I saw with bitter eyes
The bold Sansfoy shrink underneath his spear ;
And now the prey of fowls in field he lies,
Nor wail'd of friends, nor laid on groaning bier,
That whilom¹⁹ was to me too dearly dear.
O ! what of gods then boots it to be born,
If old Aveugle's²⁰ sons so evil hear ?²¹

¹⁴ Cave or den, in which she immured herself.

¹⁵ Mad.

¹⁶ Unfamiliar.

¹⁷ Ere it was made.

¹⁸ Descendants, grandchildren ; Latin, "nepos."

¹⁹ Once.

²⁰ The Blind One ; a name for Night.

²¹ A literal rendering of the classical phrases *κακῶς ἀκούειν*, and "male audire," to be contemned or in evil repute, to hear or have evil things spoken of one.

Or who shall not great Night's children scorn,
When two of three her nephews are so foul for-
lorn?

"Up, then; up, dreary Dame, of darkness queen;
Go gather up the reliques of thy race;
Or else go them avenge; and let be seen
That dreaded Night in brightest day hath place,
And can the children of fair Light deface."¹
Her feeling speeches some compassion mov'd
In heart, and change in that great mother's face;
Yet pity in her heart was never prov'd
Till then; for evermore she hated, never lov'd:

And said, "Dear daughter, rightly may I rue²
The fall of famous children born of me,
And good successes which their foes ensue:³
But who can turn the stream of destiny,
Or break the chain of strong necessity,
Which fast is tied to Jove's eternal seat?
The sons of Day he favoureth, I see,
And by my ruins thinks to make them great:
To make one great by others' loss is bad escheat."⁴

"Yet shall they not escape so freely all;
For some shall pay the price of others' guilt:
And he, the man that made Sansfoy to fall,
Shall with his own blood price⁵ that he hath spilt.
But what art thou, that tell'st of nephews kilt?"⁶
"I, that do seem not I, Duessa am,"
Quoth she, "however now, in garments gilt
And gorgeous gold array'd, I to thee came;
Duessa I, the daughter of Deceit and Shame."

Then, bowing down her aged back, she kist
The wicked witch, saying; "In that fair face
The false resemblance of Deceit, I wist,
Did closely lurk; yet so true-seeming grace
It carried, that I scarce in darksome place
Could it discern; though I the mother be
Of Falsehood, and root of Duessa's race.
O welcome, child, whom I have long'd to see,
And now have seen unwares! Lo, now I go
with thee."

Then to her iron waggon she betakes,
And with her bears the foul well-favour'd witch:
Through mirksome⁷ air her ready way she makes.
Her twyfold⁸ team (of which two black as pitch,
And two were brown, yet each to each unlich⁹),
Did softly swim away, nor ever stamp
Unless she chanc'd their stubborn mouths to
twitch;
Then, foaming tar, their bridles they would
champ,
And trampling the fine element would fiercely
ramp.¹⁰

So well they sped, that they be come at length
Unto the place where as the Paynim lay,
Devoid of outward sense and native strength,
Cover'd with charm'd cloud from view of day
And sight of men, since his late luckless fray.
His cruel wounds, with cruddy¹¹ blood congeal'd,
They binden up so wisely as they may,

And handle softly, till they can be heal'd:
So lay him in her chariot, close in night con-
ceal'd.

And, all the while she stood upon the ground,
The wakeful dogs did never cease to bay;
As giving warning of th' unwonted sound
With which her iron wheels did them affray,¹²
And her dark grisly look them much dismay.
The messenger of death, the ghastly owl,
With dreary shrieks did also her bewray;
And hungry wolves continually did howl
At her abhorred face, so filthy and so foul.

Thence, turning back in silence, soft they stole,
And brought the heavy corse with easy pace
To yawning gulf of deep Avernus' hole:
By that same hole an entrance, dark and base,¹³
With smoke and sulphur hiding all the place,
Descends to hell: there creature never pass'd
That back return'd without heavenly grace;
But dreadful Furies, which their chains have
brast,¹⁴

And damn'd sprites sent forth to make ill men
aghast.¹⁵

By that same way the direful dames do drive
Their mournful chariot, fill'd with rusty blood,
And down to Pluto's house are come belive;¹⁶
Which passing through, on every side them stood
The trembling ghosts with sad amaz'd mood,
Chatt'ring their iron teeth, and staring wide
With stony eyes; and all the hellish brood
Of fiends infernal flock'd on ev'ry side,
To gaze on earthly wight that with the Night
durst ride.

They pass the bitter waves of Acheron,
Where many souls sit wailing woefully;
And come to fiery flood of Phlegethon,
Where as the damn'd ghosts in torments fry,
And with sharp shrilling shrieks do bootless¹⁷
cry,

Cursing high Jove, the which them thither sent.
The house of endless Pain is built thereby,
In which ten thousand sorts of punishment
The curs'd creatures do eternally torment.

Before the threshold dreadful Cerberus
His three deform'd heads did lay along,
Curl'd with thousand adders venomous;
And lill'd¹⁸ forth his bloody flaming tongue;
At them he gan to rear his bristles strong,
And felly gnarr,¹⁹ until Day's enemy²⁰
Did him appease; then down his tail he hung,
And suffer'd them to passen quietly:
For she in hell and heav'n had power equally.

There was Ixion turn'd on a wheel,
For daring tempt the queen of heaven to sin;
And Sisyphus a huge round stone did reel
Against a hill, nor might from labour lin;²¹
There thirsty Tantalus hung by the chin;
And Tityus fed a vulture on his maw;
Typhoeus' joints were stretch'd on a gin;²²

¹ Destroy.

² Attend.

³ Purchase, atone.

⁷ Darksome, murky.

⁹ Unlike.

¹⁰ Leap.

² Lament.

⁴ Forfeit.

⁶ Stain.

⁸ Double, twofold.

¹¹ Ourdled or clotted.

¹² Terrify.

¹⁵ Afraid.

¹⁷ Uselessly.

¹⁹ Snarl.

²¹ Desist, rest.

¹³ Low.

¹⁴ Burst.

¹⁶ Quickly.

¹⁸ Loll'd.

²⁰ Night.

²² Rack.

Theseus condemn'd to endless sloth by law ;
And fifty sisters water in leak¹ vessels draw.
They all, beholding worldly wights in place,²
Leave off their work, unmindful of their smart,
To gaze on them ; who forth by them do pace,
Till they be come unto the farthest part ;
Where was a cave y-wrought by wondrous art,
Deep, dark, uneasy, doleful, comfortless,
In which sad Æsculapius far apart
Imprison'd was in chains remediless,
For that Hippolytus' rent corse he did redress.³

Hippolytus a jolly huntsman was,
That went in chariot chase the foaming boar :
He all his peers in beauty did surpass ;
But ladies' love, as loss of time, forbore :
His wanton stepdame⁴ lov'd him the more ;
But, when she saw her offer'd sweets refus'd,
Her love she turn'd to hate, and him before
His father fierce of treason false accus'd,
And with her jealous terms his open ears abus'd ;
Who, all in rage, his sea-god sire⁵ besought
Some curs'd vengeance on his son to cast ;
From surging gulf two monsters straight were
brought,

With dread whereof his chasing steeds aghast
Both chariot swift and huntsman overcast.
His goodly corse, on ragged cliffs y-rent,⁶
Was quite dismember'd, and his members chaste
Scatter'd on every mountain as he went,
That of Hippolytus was left no monument.⁷

His cruel stepdame, seeing what was done,
Her wicked days with wretched knife did end,
In death avowing th' innocence of her son.
Which hearing, his rash sire began to rend
His hair, and hasty tongue that did offend :
Then, gath'ring up the reliques of his smart,⁸
By Dian's means who was Hippolyt's friend,
Them brought to Æsculape, that by his art
Did heal them all again, and join'd every part.

Such wondrous science in man's wit to reign
When Jove advis'd,⁹ that could the dead revive,
And fates expired could renew again,
Of endless life he might him not deprive ;
But unto hell did thrust him down alive,
With flashing thunderbolt y-wounded sore :
Where, long remaining, he did always strive
Himself with salves to health for to restore,
And slake the heav'nly fire that rag'd evermore.

There ancient Night arriving, did alight
From her nigh-weary wain, and in her arms
To Æsculapius brought the wounded knight :
Whom having softly disarray'd of arms,
Then gan to him discover all his harms,
Beseeching him with prayer, and with praise,
If either salves, or oils, or herbs, or charms,
A fordone¹⁰ wight from door of death might raise,
He would at her request prolong her nephew's¹¹
days.

¹ Leaky ; the Danaides are meant.

² Present.

³ Restore.

⁴ Phædra, whom Theseus had married ; Hippolytus was his son by Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons.

⁵ Ægeus ; or Poseidon.

⁶ Torn ; he was dragged along the ground by his own horses till he died.

⁷ Memorial, trace.

⁸ The remains of his son—the relics of his anguish.

"Ah Dame," quoth he, "thou temptest me
in vain

To dare the thing, which daily yet I rue ;
And the old cause of my continued pain
With like attempt to like end to renew.
Is not enough, that, thrust from heaven due,¹²
Here endless penance for one fault I pay ;
But that redoubled crime with vengeance new
Thou biddest me to eke ?¹³ can Night defray¹⁴
The wrath of thund'ring Jove, that rules both
Night and Day ?"

"Not so," quoth she ; "but, since that
heaven's king

From hope of heav'n hath thee excluded quite,
Why fearest thou, that canst not hope for thing ?
And fearest not that more thee hurten might,
Now in the power of everlasting Night ?
Go to, then, O thou far renown'd son
Of great Apollo ! show thy famous might
In medicine, that else¹⁵ hath to thee won
Great pains, and greater praise, both never to
be done."

Her words prevail'd : and then the learned
leech¹⁶

His cunning hand gan to his wounds to lay,
And all things else, the which his art did teach :
Which having seen, from thence arose away
The Mother of dread darkness, and let stay
Aveugle's son there in the leech's cure ;¹⁷
And, back returning, took her wonted way
To run her timely race, whilst Phœbus pure
In western waves his weary waggon did recure.¹⁸

The false Duesse, leaving noyous¹⁹ Night,
Return'd to stately palace of Dame Pride :
Where when she came, she found the Faery
Knight

Departed thence ; although (his woundes wide
Not thoroughly heal'd) unready were to ride.
Good cause he had to hasten thence away ;
For on a day his wary Dwarf had spied
Where, in a dungeon deep, huge numbers lay
Of caitive²⁰ wretched thralls, that wail'd night
and day ;—

A rueful sight as could be seen with eye ;—
Of whom he learn'd had in secret wise
The hidden cause of their captivity ;
How, mortgaging their lives to Covetise,
Through wasteful pride and wanton riotise,
They were, by law of that proud tyranness,
Provok'd with Wrath and Envy's false surmise,
Condemn'd to that dungeon merciless,
Where they should live in woe, and die in
wretchedness.

There was that great proud king of Babylon,
That would compel all nations to adore,
And him as only God to call upon ;
Till, through celestial doom²¹ thrown out of door,

⁹ Perceived.

¹⁰ Ruined, undone.

¹¹ Grandson's.

¹² Where, as the son of Apollo, and an immortal, he had a right to dwell.

¹³ Augment, add to.

¹⁴ Satisfy.

¹⁵ Already, in other cases.

¹⁶ Surgeon.

¹⁷ Cure.

¹⁸ Recover from fatigue.

¹⁹ Bateful, noisome.

²⁰ Captive.

²¹ Judgment.

Into an ox he was transform'd of yore.
There also was king Croesus, that enhanc'd¹
His heart too high, through his great riches'
store;
And proud Antiochus, the which advanc'd
His curs'd hand 'gainst God, and on his altars
danc'd.²

And, them long time before, great Nimrod was,
That first the world with sword and fire war-
ray'd;³

And after him old Ninus far did pass
In princely pomp, of all the world obey'd.
There also was that mighty monarch⁴ laid
Low under all, yet above all in pride,
That name of native sire did foul upbraid,
And would as Ammon's son be magnified;
Till, scorn'd of God and man, a shameful death
he died.

All these together in one heap were thrown,
Like carcases of beasts in butcher's stall.
And in another corner wide were strown
The antique ruins of the Romans' fall:
Great Romulus, the grandsire of them all;
Proud Tarquin; and too lordly Lentulus;
Stout Scipio; and stubborn Hannibal;
Ambitious Sylla; and stern Marius;
High Cæsar; great Pompéy; and fierce Anto-
nius.

Amongst these mighty men were women mix'd,
Proud women, vain, forgetful of their yoke:⁵
The bold Semiramis, whose sides, transfix'd
With son's own blade, her foul reproaches spoke:
Fair Sthenobœa,⁶ that herself did choke
With wilful cord, for wanting of her will;
High-minded Cleopatra, that with stroke
Of asp's sting herself did stoutly kill:
And thousands more the like, that did that
dungeon fill.

Besides the endless routs⁷ of wretched thralls⁸
Which thither were assembled, day by day,
From all the world, after their woeful falls
Through wicked pride, and wasted wealth's de-
cay.

But most, of all which in that dungeon lay,
Fell from high princes' courts, or ladies bow'rs;
Where they in idle pomp, or wanton play,
Consum'd had their goods and thriftless hours,
And lastly thrown themselves into these heavy
stowres.⁹

Whose case when as the careful Dwarf had told,
And made ensample of their mournful sight
Unto his master, he no longer wo'd
There dwell in peril of like painful plight,
But early rose; and, ere that dawning light
Discover'd had the world to heaven wide,
He by a privy postern took his flight,

¹ Lifted up.

² See their "Tragedies," as recited by Chaucer in the Monk's Tale, pages 158 *et seqq.*

³ Harassed with war.

⁴ Alexander the Great.

⁵ Their natural subjection to men, or to the re-
straints and honour of their sex.

⁶ Wife of Proetus, king of Argos, to whose protection
Bellerophon fled after he had slain the Corinthian
Bellerus. Sthenobœa, otherwise called Antea, made

That of no envious eyes he might be spied:
For doubtless death ensued if any him descried.

Scarce could he footing find in that foul way,
For many corse, like a great lay-stall,¹⁰
Of murder'd men, which therein strow'd lay
Without remorse or decent funeral;
Which, all through that great Princess Pride,
did fall,

And came to shameful end: and them beside,
Forth riding underneath the castle wall,
A dunghill of dead carcases he spied:
The dreadful spectacle of that sad House of
Pride.

CANTO VI.

*From lawless lust by wondrous grace
Fair Una is releast:
Whom salvage nation does adore,
And learns her wise behest.*

As when a ship, that flies fair under sail,
A hidden rock escap'd hath unware,
That lay in wait her wreck for to bewail;
The mariner yet half amaz'd stares
At peril past, and yet in doubt not dares
To joy at his foolhappy oversight:¹¹
So doubly is distress'd, 'twixt joy and cares,
The dreadless courage of this Elfin Knight,
Having escap'd so sad ensamples in his sight.

Yet sad he was, that his too hasty speed
The fair Duess' had forc'd him leave behind;
And yet more sad, that Una, his dear dread,¹²
Her truth had stain'd with treason so unkind;
Yet crime in her could never creature find;
But for his love, and for her own self sake,
She wander'd had from one to other Ind,
Him for to seek, nor ever would forsake;
Till her unware the fierce Sansloy did overtake;

Who, after Archimago's foul defeat,
Led her away into a forest wild;
And, turning wrathful fire to lustful heat,
With beastly sin thought her to have defil'd,
And made the vassal of his pleasures vild.¹³
Yet first he cast by treaty, and by trains,¹⁴
Her to persuade that stubborn fort to yield:
For greater conquest of hard love he gains,
That works it to his will, than he that it con-
strains.

With fawning words he courted her a while;
And, looking lovely¹⁵ and oft sighing sore,
Her constant heart did tempt with diverse guile:
But words, and looks, and sighs she did abhor—
As rock of diamond steadfast evermore.
Yet, for to feed his fiery lustful eye,

proffer of her love to the refugee; but Bellerophon
rejected her advances, and she accused him to her
husband of abusing his hospitality. Thence sprang
various futile endeavours to kill Bellerophon, after
whose departure the baffled temptress is said to have
strangled herself.

⁷ Crowds.

⁹ Calamities.

¹¹ Fortuitous escape.

¹³ Vile.

¹⁵ Lovingly.

⁵ Slaves.

²⁰ A rubbish-heap.

¹² See note 19, page 310.

¹⁴ Deceits, stratagema.

He snatch'd the veil that hung her face before ;
Then gan her beauty shine as brightest sky,
And burn'd his beastly heart t' enforce her
chastity.

So, when he saw his flatt'ring arts to fail,
And subtle engines beat from battery,
With greedy force he gan the fort assail,
Whereof he ween'd ¹ possess'd soon to be,
And win rich spoil of ransack'd chastity.
Ah heav'n's! that do this hideous act behold,
And heav'nly virgin thus outrag'd see,
How can ye vengeance just so long withhold,
And hurl not flashing flames upon that Paynim
bold?

The piteous maiden, careful, ² comfortless,
Does throw out thrilling shrieks, and shrieking
cries

(The last vain help of women's great distress) ;
And with loud complaints importuneth the skies,
That molten stars do drop like weeping eyes ;
And Phoebus, flying so most shameful sight,
His blushing face in foggy cloud implies, ³
And hides for shame. What wit of mortal wight
Can now devise to quit a thrall from such a
plight?

Eternal Providence, exceeding thought,
Where none appears can make herself a way !
A wondrous way it for this Lady wrought,
From lions' claws to pluck the grip'd prey.
Her shrill outcries and shrieks so loud did bray, ⁴
That all the woods and forests did resound :
A troop of Fauns and Satyrs far away
Within the wood were dancing in a round,
While old Sylvanus slept in shady arbour sound:

Who when they heard that piteous strain'd voice,
In haste forsook their rural merriment,
And ran toward the far rebounded ⁵ noise,
To weet ⁶ what wight so loudly did lament.
Unto the place they come incontinent :
Whom when the raging Saracen espied,
A rude, misshapen, monstrous rabblement,
Whose like he never saw, he durst not bide ; ⁷
But got his ready steed, and fast away gan ride.

The wild wood-gods, arriv'd in the place,
There find the Virgin, doleful, desolate,
With ruffled raiments, and fair blubber'd ⁸ face,
As her outrageous foe had left her late ;
And trembling yet through fear of former hate :
All stand amaz'd at so uncouth sight,
And gin to pity her unhappy state ;
All stand astonish'd at her beauty bright,
In their rude eyes unworthy of so woeful plight.

She, more amaz'd, in double dread doth dwell,
And every tender part for fear does shake.
As when a greedy wolf, through hunger fell,
A seely ⁹ lamb far from the flock does take,
Of whom he means his bloody feast to make,
A lion spies fast running toward him,
Th' innocent prey in haste he does forsake ;

Which, quit from death, yet quakes in every limb
With change of fear, to see the lion look so grim.

Such fearful fit assay'd ¹⁰ her trembling heart ;
No word to speak nor joint to move she had ;
The salvage nation feel her secret smart,
And read her sorrow in her count'nance sad ;
Their frowning foreheads, with rough horns yclad,
And rustic horror, all aside do lay,
And, gently grinning, shew a semblance glad,
To comfort her ; and, fear to put away,
Their backward-bent knees ¹¹ teach her humbly
to obey.

The doubtful damsel dare not yet commit
Her single person to their barbarous truth ;
But still 'twixt fear and hope amaz'd does sit,
Late learn'd what harm to hasty truth ensu'th :
They in compassion of her tender youth,
And wonder of her beauty sovereign,
Are won with pity and unwonted ruth ; ¹²
And, prostrate all upon the lowly plain,
Do kiss her feet, and fawn on her with count'-
nance fain. ¹³

Their hearts she guesseth by their humble guise,
And yields her to extremity of time : ¹⁴
So from the ground she fearless doth arise,
And walketh forth without suspect ¹⁵ of crime :
They, all as glad as birds of joyous prime, ¹⁶
Thence lead her forth, about her dancing round,
Shouting, and singing all a shepherd's rhyme ;
And, with green branches strowing all the ground,
Do worship her as queen, with olive garland
crown'd.

And all the way their merry pipes they sound,
That all the woods with doubled echo ring ;
And with their horn'd feet do wear the ground,
Leaping like wanton kids in pleasant spring.
So toward old Sylvanus they her bring ;
Who, with the noise awak'd, cometh out
To weet the cause, his weak steps governing,
And aged limbs, on cypress staddle ¹⁷ stout ;
And with an ivy twine his waist is girt about.

Far off he wonders what them makes so glad ;
Or Bacchus' merry fruit they did invent, ¹⁸
Or Cybele's frantic rites have made them mad :
They, drawing nigh, unto their god present
That flower of faith and beauty excellent :
The god himself, viewing that mirror rare,
Stood long amaz'd, and burnt in his intent :
His own fair Dryop' now he thinks not fair,
And Pholoë foul, when her to this he doth
compare.

The wood-born people fall before her flat,
And worship her as goddess of the wood ;
And old Sylvanus' self bethinks not what
To think of wight so fair ; but gazing stood
In doubt to deem her born of earthly brood :
Sometimes dame Venus' self he seems to see ;
But Venus never had so sober mood :

¹ Thought.

² Enwraps, enfolds.

³ Reverberated.

⁴ Tarry on the spot.

⁵ Simple, innocent.

⁶ Sorrowful.

⁷ Sound, re-echo.

⁸ Know, learn.

⁹ Tear-stained.

¹⁰ Tested, attacked.

¹¹ Like those of fauns and satyrs in antique works of art.

¹² Compassion.

¹³ Glad.

¹⁴ The emergency of the moment.

¹⁵ Suspicion, apprehension.

¹⁶ Spring.

¹⁷ Staff, support.

¹⁸ Discover grapes.

Sometimes Diana he her takes to be ;
But misseth bow and shafts, and buskins to her
knee.

By view of her he ginneth¹ to revive
His ancient love, and dearest Cyparisse ;²
And calls to mind his portraiture alive,
How fair he was, and yet not fair to this ;
And how he slew with glancing dart amiss
A gentle hind, the which the lovely boy
Did love as life, above all worldly bliss :
For grief whereof the lad n' ould after joy ;³
But pin'd away in anguish and self-will'd annoy.⁴

The woody nymphs, fair Hamadryades,
Her to behold do thither run apace ;
And all the troop of light-foot Naiades
Flock all about to see her lovely face :
But, when they view'd have her heav'nly grace,
They envy her in their malicious mind,
And fly away for fear of foul disgrace :⁵
But all the Satyrs scorn their woody kind,
And henceforth nothing fair, but her, on earth
they find.

Glad of such luck, the luckless lucky maid
Did her content to please their feeble eyes ;
And long time with that salvage people stay'd,
To gather breath in many miseries.
During which time her gentle wit she plies
To teach them truth, which worshipt her in vain,
And made her th' image of idolatries :
But, when their bootless zeal she did restrain
From her own worship, they her ass would
worship fain.

It fortun'd, a noble warlike knight
By just occasion to that forest came,
To seek his kindred, and the lineage right
From whence he took his well-deserv'd name :
He had in arms abroad won muchel fame,
And fill'd far lands with glory of his might ;
Plain, faithful, true, and enemy of shame,
And ever lov'd to fight for ladies' right :
But in vain-glorious frays he little did delight.

A Satyr's son, y-born in forest wild,
By strange adventure as it did betide,⁶
And there begotten of a lady mild,
Fair Thyamis, the daughter of Labryde ;
That was in sacred bands of wedlock tied
To Therion, a loose unruly swain,
Who had more joy to range the forest wide,
And chase the salvage beast with busy pain,
Than serve his lady's love, and waste in pleas-
ures vain.

The forlorn maid did with love's longing burn,
And could not lack her lover's company ;
But to the wood she goes, to serve her turn,
And seek her spouse, that from her still does fly,
And follows other game and venerf :⁷
A Satyr chanc'd her wand'ring for to find ;
And, kindling coals of lust in brutish eye,

¹ Begins.

² Cyparissus, a boy beloved of Sylvanus, killed a favourite stag of Apollo, and pining away in grief, was changed into a cypress.

³ Would afterwards have no joy.

⁴ In the comparison with her.

⁵ Grief.

⁶ Happen.

The loyal links of wedlock did unbind,
And made her person thrall unto his beastly
kind.⁸

So long in secret cabin there he held
Her captive to his sensual desire ;
Till that with timely fruit her belly swell'd,
And bore a boy unto that salvage sire :
Then home he suffer'd her for to retire,
For ransom leaving him the late-born child :
Whom, till to riper years he gan aspire,
He noursed⁹ up in life and manners wild,
Amongst wild beasts and woods, from laws of
men exil'd.

For all he taught the tender imp,¹⁰ was but
To banish cowardice and bastard fear :
His trembling hand he would him force to put
Upon the lion and the rugged bear ;
And from the she-bear's teats her whelps to tear ;
And eke wild roaring bulls he would him make
To tame, and ride their backs not made to bear ;
And the reebucks in flight to overtake :
That every beast for fear of him did fly and
quake.

Thereby so fearless and so fell he grew,
That his own sire and master of his guise¹¹
Did often tremble at his horrid view ;
And oft, for dread of hurt, would him advise
The angry beasts not rashly to despise,
Nor too much to provoke ; for he would learn¹²
The lion stoop to him in lowly wise
(A lesson hard), and make the libbard¹³ stern
Leave roaring, when in rage he for revenge did
yearn.

And, for to make his power approv'd more,¹⁴
Wild beasts in iron yokes he would compel ;
The spotted panther, and the tusk'd boar,
The pardale swift, and the tiger cruel,
The antelope and wolf, both fierce and fell ;
And them constrain in equal team to draw.
Such joy he had their stubborn hearts to quell,
And sturdy courage tame with dreadful awe,
That his behest they fear'd as a tyrant's law.

His loving mother came upon a day
Unto the woods, to see her little son ;
And chanc'd unwares to meet him in the way,
After his sports and cruel pastime done ;
When after him a lioness did run,
That, roaring all with rage, did loud requere
Her children dear, whom he away had won :
The lion whelps she saw how he did bear,
And lull in rugged arms withouten childish fear.

The fearful dame all quak'd at the sight,
And, turning back, gan fast to fly away ;
Until, with love revok'd from vain affright,
She hardly yet persuaded was to stay,
And then to him these womanish words gan say ;
" Ah, Satyrane, my darling and my joy,
For love of me leave off this dreadful play ;

⁷ Sport.

⁸ Nursed.

⁹ His own father, who had trained him into his present condition or fashion.

¹⁰ Teach.

¹¹ More evident by practical proof.

¹² Nature.

¹³ Child.

¹⁴ Leopard.

To dally thus with death is no fit toy :¹
Go, find some other play-fellows, mine own
sweet boy."

In these and like delights of bloody game
He train'd was, till riper years he raught,²
And there abode, whilst any beast of name
Walk'd in that forest, whom he had not taught
To fear his force : and then his courage haught³
Desir'd of foreign foemen to be known,
And far abroad for strange adventures sought ;
In which his might was never overthrown ;
But through all Faery Land his famous worth
was blown.

Yet evermore it was his manner fair,
After long labours and adventures spent,
Unto those native woods for to repair,
To see his sire and offspring ancient.
And now he thither came for like intent ;
Where he unwares the fairest Una found,
Strange lady, in so strange habiliment,
Teaching the Satyrs, which her sat around,
True sacred lore, which from her sweet lips did
redound.⁴

He wonder'd at her wisdom heav'nly rare,
Whose like in woman's wit he never knew ;
And, when her courteous deeds he did compare,
Gan her admire, and her sad sorrows rue,⁵
Blaming of Fortune, which such troubles threw,
And joy'd to make proof of her cruelty
On gentle dame, so hurtless and so true :
Thenceforth he kept her goodly company,
And learn'd her discipline⁶ of faith and verity.

But she, all vow'd unto the Redcross Knight,
His wand'ring peril closely⁷ did lament,
Nor in this new acquaintance could delight ;
But her dear heart with anguish did torment,
And all her wit in secret counsels spent,
How to escape. At last in privy wise
To Satyrane she show'd her intent ;
Who, glad to gain such favour, gan devise
How with that pensive maid he best might
thence arise.⁸

So on a day, when Satyrs all were gone
To do their service to Sylvanus old,
The gentle Virgin, left behind alone,
He led away with courage stout and bold.
Too late it was to Satyrs to be told,
Or ever hope recover her again :
In vain he seeks that, having, cannot hold.
So fast he carried her with careful pain,
That they the woods are past, and come now to
the plain.

The better part now of the ling'ring day
They travell'd had, when as they far espied
A weary wight forwand'ring by the way ;
And toward him they gan in haste to ride,
To weet⁹ of news that did abroad betide,
Or tidings of her Knight of the Redcross ;
But he, them spying, gan to turn aside

For fear, as seem'd, or for some feign'd loss :
More greedy they of news fast toward him do
cross.

A silly¹⁰ man, in simple weeds forworn,
And soil'd with dust of the long dri'd way ;
His sandals were with toilsome travel torn,
And face all tann'd with scorching sunny ray,
As he had travell'd many a summer's day
Through boiling sands of Araby and Ind ;
And in his hand a Jacob's staff,¹¹ to stay
His weary limbs upon ; and eke behind
His scrip did hang, in which his needments he
did bind.

The knight, approaching nigh, of him inquér'd
Tidings of war, and of adventures new ;
But wars, nor new adventures, none he heard.
Then Una gan to ask, if aught he knew
Or heard abroad of that her champion true,
That in his armour bare a crosalet¹² red.
" Ay me ! dear Dame," quoth he, " well may I
rue¹³

To tell the sad sight which mine eyes have read ;¹⁴
These eyes did see that Knight both living and
eke dead."

That cruel word her tender heart so thrill'd,
That sudden cold did run through every vein,
And stony horror all her senses fill'd
With dying fit, that down she fell for pain.
The knight her lightly rear'd up again,
And comforted with courteous kind relief :
Then, won from death, she bade him tellen plain
The farther process of her hidden grief :
The lesser pangs can bear, who hath endur'd the
chief.

Then gan the pilgrim thus ; " I chanc'd this day,
This fatal day, that shall I ever rue,¹⁵
To see two knights, in travel on my way
(A sorry sight), arrang'd in battle new,
Both breathing vengeance, both of wrathful hue :
My fearful flesh did tremble at their strife,
To see their blades so greedily imbrue,
That, drunk with blood, yet thirsted after life :
What more ? the Redcross Knight was slain
with Paynim knife."

" Ah ! dearest Lord," quoth she, " how might
that be,
And he the stoutest knight that ever wonne ?"¹⁶
" Ah ! dearest Dame," quoth he, " how might
I see

The thing, that might not be, and yet was done ?"
" Where is," said Satyrane, " that Paynim's son
That him of life, and us of joy, hath reft ?"
" Not far away," quoth he, " he hence doth
won,¹⁷

Foreby¹⁷ a fountain, where I late him left
Washing his bloody wounds, that through the
steel were cleft."

Therewith the knight then march'd forth in
haste,

1 Amusement.
2 Lofty ; French, "haut."
3 Pity.
4 Secretly.
5 Learn, know.

2 Reached.
4 Overflow.
6 Teaching.
8 Depart.
10 Simple.

11 A staff used in pilgrimages to the shrine of St James, or St Iago, of Spain.

12 Small cross.
14 Perceived.
16 Dwell, abide.

13 Regret.
15 Lived.
17 Near.

While Una, with huge heaviness oppress,
 Could not for sorrow follow him so fast ;
 And soon he came, as he the place had guess'd,
 Where as that Pagan proud¹ himself did rest
 In secret shadow by a fountain side ;
 Ev'n he it was, that erst² would have suppress³
 Fair Una ; whom when Satyrane espied,
 With foul reproachful words he boldly him
 defied ;

And said ; " Arise, thou cursed miscreant,⁴
 That hast with knightless guile, and treach'rous
 train,⁵

Fair knighthood foully sham'd, and dost vaunt
 That good Knight of the Redcross to have slain :
 Arise, and with like treason now maintain
 Thy guilty wrong, or else thee guilty yield." ⁶
 The Saracen, this hearing, rose amain,
 And, catching up in haste his three-squared shield
 And shining helmet, soon him buckled to the
 field ;

And, drawing nigh him, said ; " Ah ! misborn Elf,
 In evil hour thy foes thee hither sent
 Another's wrongs to wreak upon thyself :
 Yet ill thou blamest me, for having blent⁶
 My name with guile and traitorous intent :
 That Redcross Knight, pardie,⁷ I never slew ;
 But had he been, where erst his arms were lent,⁸
 Th' enchanter vain his error should not rue :
 But thou his error shalt, I hope, now proven
 true."

Therewith they gan, both furious and fell,
 To thunder blows, and fiercely to assail
 Each other, bent his enemy to quell ;
 That with their force they pierc'd both plate
 and mail,

And made wide furrows in their fleshs frail,
 That it would pity any living eye :
 Large floods of blood adown their sides did rail ;⁹
 But floods of blood could not them satisfy :
 Both hunger'd after death ; both chose to win,
 or die.

So long they fight, and full revenge pursue,
 That, fainting, each themselves to breathe let ;¹⁰
 And, oft refresh'd, battle oft renew.
 As when two boars, with rankling malice met,
 Their gory sides fresh bleeding fiercely fret ;¹¹
 Till breathless both themselves aside retire,
 Where, foaming wrath, their cruel tusks they
 whet,
 And trampleth' earth, the while they may respire ;
 Then back to fight again, new breath'd and entire.

So fiercely, when these knights had breath'd
 once,

They gan to fight return ; increasing more
 Their puissant force and cruel rage at once,
 With heap'd strokes more hugely than before ;
 That with their dreary wounds, and bloody gore,
 They both deform'd,¹² scarcely could be known.
 By this, sad Una, fraught with anguish sore,

¹ Sansloy.

² Before.

³ Outraged.

⁴ Unbeliever.

⁵ Stratagem.

⁶ Obscured, disgraced.

⁷ By the gods.

⁸ Where formerly he had lent his arms—when Archimago, in the semblance of the Redcross Knight's armour, was overthrown by Sansloy.

Led with their noise which through the air was
 thrown,
 Arriv'd where they in earth their fruitless blood
 had sown.

Whom all so soon as that proud Saracen
 Espied, he gan revive the memory
 Of his lewd lusts, and late attempted sin ;
 And left the doubtful battle hastily,
 To catch her, newly offer'd to his eye :
 But Satyrane, with strokes him turning, stay'd,
 And sternly bade him other business ply
 Than hunt the steps of pure unspotted maid :
 Wherewith he, all enrag'd, these bitter speeches
 said ;

" O foolish Faery's son, what fury mad
 Hath thee incens'd to haste thy doleful fate ?
 Were it not better I that Lady had,
 Than that thou hadst repented it too late ?
 Most senseless man he, that himself doth hate
 To love another : Lo then, for thine aid,
 Here take thy lover's token on thy pate."
 So they to fight ; the while the royal maid
 Fled far away, of that proud Paynim sore afraid.

But that false pilgrim, which that leasing¹³ told,
 Being indeed old Archimage, did stay
 In secret shadow all this to behold ;
 And much rejoic'd in their bloody fray :
 But, when he saw the damsel pass away,
 He left his stand,¹⁴ and her pursued apace,
 In hope to bring her to her last decay.¹⁵
 But for to tell her lamentable case,
 And eke this battle's end, will need another place.

CANTO VII.

*The Redcross Knight is captive made,
 By Giant proud oppress :
 Prince Arthur meets with Una great-
 ly with those news distressed.*

WHAT man so wise, what earthly wit so ware,¹⁶
 As to descry the crafty cunning train
 By which Deceit doth mask in visor fair,
 And cast¹⁷ her colours, dy'd deep in grain,
 To seem like Truth whose shape she well can fain,
 And fitting gestures to her purpose frame,
 The guiltless man with guile to entertain ?
 Great mistress of her art was that false dame,
 The false Duessa, cloak'd with Fidessa's name.

Who when, returning from the dreary Night,
 She found not in that perilous House of Pride,
 Where she had left, the noble Redcross Knight,
 Her hop'd prey : she would no longer bide,
 But forth she went to seek him far and wide.
 Ere long she found, where as he weary sate
 To rest himself, foreby¹⁸ a fountain side,
 Disarm'd all of iron-coated plate ;
 And by his side his steed the grassy forage ate.

⁹ Flow.

¹⁰ Left off to give themselves breath.

¹¹ Tear.

¹² Disfigured.

¹³ Falsehood.

¹⁴ Station.

¹⁵ Destruction.

¹⁶ Cautious.

¹⁷ Contrive, arrange.

¹⁸ Near.

He feeds upon the cooling shade, and bays¹
His sweaty forehead in the breathing wind,
Which through the trembling leaves full gently
plays,

Wherein the cheerful birds of sundry kind
Do chant sweet music, to delight his mind.
The witch approaching gan him fairly greet,
And, with reproach of carelessness unkind,
Upbraid for leaving her in place unmeet,
With foul words temp'ring fair, sour gall with
honey sweet.

Unkindness past, they gan of solace treat,
And bathe in pleasance of the joyous shade,
Which shielded them against the boiling heat,
And, with green boughs decking a gloomy glade,
About the fountain like a garland made ;
Whose bubbling wave did ever freshly well,
Nor ever would through fervent summer fade :
The sacred nymph, which therein wont to dwell,
Was out of Dian's favour, as it then befell.

The cause was this : One day, when Phoebe fair
With all her band was following the chase,
This nymph, quite tir'd with heat of scorching
air

Sat down to rest in midst of the race :
The goddess, wroth, gan foully her disgrace,²
And bade the waters, which from her did flow,
Be such as she herself was then in place.³
Thenceforth her waters wax'd dull and slow ;
And all that drank thereof did faint and feeble
grow.

Hereof this gentle Knight unweeting⁴ was ;
And, lying down upon the sandy grail,⁵
Drank of the stream, as clear as crystal glass :
Eftsoons⁶ his manly forces gan to fail,
And mighty strong was turn'd to feeble frail.
His chang'd powers at first themselves not felt ;
Till curdled cold his courage gan assail,
And cheerful blood in faintness chill did melt,
Which, like a fever fit, through all his body
swelt.⁷

Yet goodly court he made still to his dame,
Pour'd out in looseness on the grassy ground,
Both careless of his health and of his fame :
Till at the last he heard a dreadful sound,
Which through the wood loud bellowing did re-
bound,

That all the earth for terror seem'd to shake,
And trees did tremble. Th' Elf, therewith
astound',⁸

Upstart'd lightly from his looser make,⁹
And his unready weapons gan in hand to take.

But ere he could his armour on him dight,
Or get his shield, his monstrous enemy
With sturdy steps came stalking in his sight,
A hideous giant, horrible and high,
That with his tallness seem'd to threat the sky ;
The ground eke groan'd under him for dreed :¹⁰
His living like saw never living eye,

Nor durst behold ; his stature did exceed
The height of three the tallest sons of mortal
seed.

The greatest Earth his unconth mother was,
And blust'ring Æolus his boasted sire ;
Who with his breath, which through the world
doth pass,

Her hollow womb did secretly inspire,
And fill'd her hidden caves with stormy ire,
That she conceiv'd ; and, trebling the due time
In which the wombs of women do expire,¹¹
Brought forth this monstrous mass of earthly
alime,
Puff'd up with empty wind, and fill'd with sin-
ful crime.

So grown great, through arrogant delight
Of th' high descent whereof he was y-born,
And through presumption of his matchless might,
All other pow'rs and knighthood he did scorn.
Such now he marcheth to this man forlorn¹²
And left to loss ; his stalking steps are stay'd
Upon a snaggy¹³ oak, which he had torn
Out of his mother's bowels, and it made
His mortal mace, wherewith his foemen he dis-
may'd.

That, when the Knight he spied, he gan advance
With huge force and insupportable main,¹⁴
And toward him with dreadful fury prance ;
Who, hapless and eke hopeless, all in vain
Did to him pace sad battle to darrain,¹⁵
Disarm'd, disgrac'd, and inwardly dismay'd ;
And eke so faint in every joint and vein,
Through that frail fountain, which him feeble
made,

That scarcely could he wield his bootless¹⁶ single
blade.

The giant struck so mainly¹⁷ merciless,
That could have overthrown a stony tow'r ;
And, were not heav'nly grace that did him bless,
He had been powder'd¹⁸ all as thin as flour :
But he was wary of that deadly stowre,¹⁹
And lightly leapt from underneath the blow :
Yet so exceeding was the villain's pow'r,
That with the wind it did him overthrow,
And all his senses stunn'd, that still he lay full low.

As when that devilish iron engine, wrought
In deepest hell, and fram'd by Furies' skill,
With windy nitre and quick sulphur fraught,
And ramm'd with bullet round, ordain'd to kill,
Conceiveth fire ; the heavens it doth fill
With thund'ring noise, and all the air doth choke,
That none can breathe, nor see, nor hear at will,
Through smould'ry²⁰ cloud of duskish stinking
smoke ;

That th' only breath²¹ him daunts, who hath
escap'd the stroke.

So daunted when the giant saw the Knight,
His heavy hand he heav'd up on high,

¹ Bathes.

² On the spot where she rested.

³ Gravel.

⁷ Diffused faintness.

⁹ Companion.

¹¹ Give forth their burden.

² Reproach.

⁴ Ignorant.

⁶ Immediately.

⁸ Astonished.

¹⁰ Dread.

¹² The Redcross Knight.

¹⁴ Strength.

¹⁶ Ineffectual.

¹⁸ Beaten to powder.

²⁰ Smothering.

²¹ The very breath, the mere breathing of the smoke.

¹³ Knotted.

¹⁵ Offer.

¹⁷ Strongly.

¹⁹ Peril.

And him to dust thought to have batter'd quite,
 Until Duessa loud to him gan cry ;
 "O great Orgoglio,¹ greatest under sky,
 Oh ! hold thy mortal hand for lady's sake ;
 Hold for my sake, and do him not to die,²
 But vanquish'd thine eternal bond-slave make,
 And me, thy worthy meed,³ unto thy leman⁴
 take."

He hearken'd, and did stay from farther harms,
 To gain so goodly guerdon⁵ as she spake :
 So willingly she came into his arms,
 Who her as willingly to grace⁶ did take,
 And was possess'd of his new-found make.⁷
 Then up he took the slumb'ring senseless corse ;
 And, ere he could out of his swoon awake,
 Him to his castle brought with hasty force,
 And in a dungeon deep him threw without re-
 morse.

From that day forth Duessa was his dear,
 And highly honour'd in his haughty eye :
 He gave her gold and purple pall to wear,
 And triple crown set on her head full high,
 And her endow'd with royal majesty :
 Then, for to make her dreaded more of men,
 And people's hearts with awful terror tie,⁸
 A monstrous beast, y-bred in filthy fen,
 He chose, which he had kept long time in dark-
 some den.

Such one it was, as that renowned snake⁹
 Which great Alcides in Stremona slew,
 Long foster'd in the filth of Lerna Lake :
 Whose many heads, out-budding ever new,
 Did breed him endless labour to subdue.
 But this same monster much more ugly was ;
 For sev'n great heads out of his body grew,
 An iron breast, and back of scaly brass,
 And all-embued in blood his eyes did shine as
 glass.

His tail was stretch'd out in wondrous length,
 That to the house of heav'nly gods it raught ;¹⁰
 And with extorted power, and borrow'd strength,
 The ever-burning lamps from thence it brought,
 And proudly threw to ground, as things of naught ;
 And underneath his filthy feet did tread
 The sacred things, and holy hests foretaught.¹¹
 Upon this dreadful beast, with sev'nfold head,
 He set the false Duessa, for more awe and dread.

The woeful Dwarf, which saw his master's fall
 (While he had keeping of his grazing steed),
 And valiant Knight become a captive thrall ;¹²
 When all was past, took up his fôrlorn weed ;¹³
 His mighty armour, missing most at need ;
 His silver shield, now idle, masterless ;
 His poignant spear, that many made to bleed ;
 The rueful monuments of heaviness ;
 And with them all departs, to tell his great
 distress.

He had not travell'd long, when on the way

¹ Arrogance.

² Reward, prize.

³ Recompense.

⁴ Companion, consort.

⁵ Subdue, bind.

⁶ The Lernean Hydra, the slaughter of which was among the great feats of Hercules.

⁷ Slay him not.

⁸ Mistress.

⁹ Favour.

He woeful Lady, woeful Una, met
 Fast flying from that Paynim's¹⁴ greedy prey,¹⁵
 Whilst flatyrane him from pursuit did let :¹⁶
 Who when her eyes she on the Dwarf had set,
 And saw the signs that deadly tidings spake,
 She fell to ground for sorrowful regret,
 And lively breath her sad breast did forsake ;
 Yet might her piteous heart be seen to pant and
 quake.

The messenger of so unhappy news
 Would fain have died; dead was his heart within;
 Yet outwardly some little comfort shews :
 At last, recover'ing heart, he does begin
 To rub her temples, and to chafe her chin,¹⁷
 And every tender part does tosse and turn :
 So hardly he the fittéd life does win
 Unto her native prison to return.
 Then gins her grievéd ghost¹⁸ thus to lament
 and mourn :

"Ye dreary instruments of doleful sight,
 That do this deadly spectacle behold,
 Why do ye longer feed on loathéd light,
 Or liking find to gaze on earthly mould,
 Since cruel Fates the careful threads unfold,
 The which my life and love together tied?
 Now let the stony dart of senseless cold
 Pierce to my heart, and pass through every side;
 And let eternal night so sad sight from me hide.

"O lightsome Day, the lamp of highest Jove,
 First made by him men's wand'ring ways to guide,
 When darkness he in deepest dungeon drove ;
 Henceforth thy hated face for ever hide,
 And shut up heaven's windows shining wide :
 For earthly sight can naught but sorrow breed,
 And late repentance, which shall long abide.
 Mine eyes no more on vanity shall feed,
 But, seal'd up with death, shall have their
 deadly meed."¹⁹

Then down again she fell unto the ground ;
 But he her quickly rear'd up again :
 Thrice did she sink adown in deadly swoond,
 And thrice he her reviv'd with busy pain.
 At last, when life recover'd had the rein,
 And over-wrestled his strong enemy,
 With falt'ring tongue, and trembling every vein,
 "Tell on," quoth she, "the woeful tragedy,
 The which these reliques sad present unto mine
 eye :

"Tempestuous Fortune hath spent all her spite,
 And thrilling Sorrow thrown his utmost dart :
 Thy sad tongue cannot tell more heavy plight
 Than that I feel, and harbour in mine heart :
 Who hath endur'd the whole, can bear each part.
 If death it be, it is not the first wound
 That lanc'd hath my breast with bleeding smart.
 Begin, and end the bitter baleful stound ;²⁰
 If less than that I fear, more favour I have
 found."

¹⁰ Reached.

¹¹ Old commandments, taught in former time.

¹² Captive slave.

¹³ Sansloy's.

¹⁴ Hinder.

¹⁵ Spirit.

¹⁶ Borrow.

¹⁷ Abandoned arms.

¹⁸ Pursuit.

¹⁹ Face.

²⁰ Gift, destiny.

Then gan the Dwarf the whole disceurse declare :
 The subtle trains¹ of Archimago old ;
 The wanton loves of false² Fidessa fair,
 Bought with the blood of vanquish'd Paynim
 bold ;³
 The wretched pair transform'd to treën mould ;
 The House of Pride, and perils round about ;
 The combat which he with Sansjoy did hold ;
 The luckless conflict with the giant stout,
 Wherein captiv'd, of life or death he stood in
 doubt.

She heard with patience all unto the end ;
 And strove to master sorrowful assay,⁴
 Which greater grew the more she did contend,
 And almost rent her tender heart in tway ;⁵
 And love fresh coals unto her fire did lay :
 For, greater love, the greater is the loss.
 Was never lady lovèd dearer day
 Then she did love the Knight of the Redcross ;
 For whose dear sake so many troubles her did
 toss.

At last, when fervent sorrow slakèd was,
 She up arose, resolving him to find
 Alive or dead ; and forward forth doth pass,
 All as the Dwarf the way to her assign'd :⁶
 And evermore, in constant careful mind,
 She fed her wound with fresh renewèd bale :⁷
 Long tost with storms, and beat with bitterwind,
 High over hills, and low adown the dale,
 She wander'd many a wood, and measur'd many
 a vale.

At last she chancèd by good hap to meet
 A goodly knight,⁸ fair marching by the way,
 Together with his squire, arrayèd meet :
 His glittering armour shinèd far away,
 Like glancing light of Phoebus' brightest ray ;
 From top to toe no place appearèd bare,
 That deadly dint of steel endanger may :
 Athwart his breast a baldric⁹ brave he ware,
 That shin'd, like twinkling stars, with stones
 most precious rare :

And, in the midst thereof, one precious stone
 Of wondrous worth, and eke of wondrous
 might,¹⁰
 Shap'd like a lady's head,¹¹ exceeding shone,
 Like Hesperus amongst the lesser lights,
 And strove for to amaze the weaker sights :
 Thereby his mortal blade full comely hung
 In ivory sheath, y-carv'd with curious sleights,¹²
 Whose hilts were burnish'd gold, and handle
 strong
 Of mother pearl ; and buckled with a golden
 tongue.

His haughty helmet, horrid¹³ all with gold,

Both glorious brightness and great terror bred :
 For all the crest a dragon did enfold
 With greedy paws, and over all did spread
 His golden wings ;¹⁴ his dreadful hideous head,
 Close couchèd on the beaver, seem'd to throw
 From flaming mouth bright sparkles fiery red,
 That sudden horror to faint hearts did show ;
 And scaly tail was stretch'd adown his back full
 low.

Upon the top of all his lofty crest,
 A bunch of hairs discolour'd diversely,
 With sprinkled pearl and gold full richly drest,
 Did shake, and seem'd to dance for jollity ;
 Like to an almond tree y-mounted high
 On top of green Selinis all alone,
 With blossoms brave bedeckèd daintily ;
 Whose tender locks do tremble ev'ry one
 Atev'ry little breath that under heaven is blown.

His warlike shield¹⁵ all closely cover'd was,
 Nor might of mortal eye be ever seen ;
 Not made of steel, nor of enduring brass
 (Such earthly metals soon consumèd been¹⁶),
 But all of diamond perfect pure and clean
 It framèd was, one massy éntire mould,
 Hewn out of adamant rock with engines keen,
 That point of spear it never piercen could,
 Nor dint of direful sword divide the substance
 would.

The same to wight he never wont disclose,¹⁷
 But when as monsters huge he would dismay,
 Or daunt unequal armies of his foes,
 Or when the flying heav'ns he would assay :
 For so exceeding shone his glist'ning ray,
 That Phoebus' golden face it did attaint,¹⁸
 As when a cloud his beams doth over-lay ;
 And silver Cynthia¹⁹ waxèd pale and faint,
 As when her face is stain'd with magic arts'
 constraint.

No magic arts hereof had any might,
 Nor bloody words of bold enchanters' call ;
 But all that was not such as seem'd in sight,
 Before that shield did fade, and sudden fall :
 And, when him list the rascal routs²⁰ appal,
 Men into stones therewith he could transmue,²¹
 And stones to dust, and dust to naught at all ;
 And, when him list the prouder looks subdue,
 He would them gazing blind, or turn to other hue.

Nor let it seem that credence this exceeds ;
 For he that made the same was known right well
 To have done much more admirable²² deeds :
 It Merlin was, which whilom did excell
 All living wights in might of magic spell :
 Both shield, and sword, and armour all he
 wrought

of the King" (page 256), describing Arthur's parting
 from Guinevere, tells us that she saw,
 "Wet with the mists and smitten with the lights,
 The Dragon of the great Pendragonship
 Blaze, making all the night a steam of fire."
¹⁵ The ancient romancers called Arthur's shield "Frid-
 wen," his sword "Caliburn" or "Excalibur," and his
 spear "Roan."

¹⁶ Are. ¹⁷ He was never wont to show to mortal.

¹⁸ Obscure. ¹⁹ The Moon.

²⁰ The base crowds of his enemies.

²¹ Transform. ²² Wonderful.

¹ Stratagems.

² The pretended.

³ Sansjoy. See Canto II.

⁴ The trial or attack of sorrow.

⁵ Two.

⁶ Pointed out.

⁷ Misery.

⁸ Prince Arthur, who was to have been the principal
 hero of the poem, according to Spenser's uncompleted
 design.

⁹ Belt.

¹⁰ Virtues, powers.

¹¹ In the likeness of the Faery Queen.

¹² Devices.

¹³ Rugged ; studded or ornamented.

¹⁴ The golden dragon was the cognisance of the royal
 race among the Britons. Tennyson, in the "Idylls

For this young Prince, when first to arms he fell,¹
But, when he died, the Faery Queen it brought
To Faery Land; where yet it may be seen, if
sought.

A gentle youth, his dearly lov'd squire,
His spear of ebon wood behind him bare,
Whose harmful head, thrice heated in the fire,
Had riven many a breast with pikehead square;
A goodly person; and could manage fair
His stubborn steed with curb'd canon bit,²
Who under him did trample as the air,
And, chaf'd that any on his back should sit,
The iron rowels³ into frothy foam he bit.

When as this knight nigh to the Lady drew,
With lovely court he gan her entertain;
But, when he heard her answers loth,⁴ he knew
Some secret sorrow did her heart distrain:⁵
Which to allay, and calm her storming pain,
Fair feeling words he wisely gan display,
And for her humour fitting purpose feign,⁶
To tempt the cause itself for to bewray;
Wherewith enmov'd, these bleeding words she
gan to say;

"What world's delight, or joy of living speech,
Can heart, so plung'd in sea of sorrows deep,
And heap'd with so huge misfortunes, reach?
The careful cold⁷ beginneth for to creep,
And in my heart his iron arrow steep,
Soon as I think upon my bitter bale.⁸
Such helpless harms 'tis better hidden keep,
Than rip up grief, where it may naught avail;
My last-left comfort is my woes to weep and
wail."

"Ah Lady dear," quoth then the gentle knight,
"Well may I ween your grief is wondrous great;
For wondrous great grief groaneth in my sprite,⁹
While thus I hear you of your sorrows treat.
But, woeful Lady, let me you intreat
For to unfold the anguish of your heart:
Mishaps are master'd by advice discreet,
And counsel mitigates the greatest smart;
Found never help, who never would his hurts
impart."

"O! but," quoth she, "great grief will not be
told,

And can more easily be thought than said."

"Right so," quoth he; "but he that never wo'ld
Could never: will to might gives greatest aid."

"But grief," quoth she, "does greater grow,
display'd,

If then it find not help, and breeds despair."

"Despair breeds not," quoth he, "where faith
is stay'd."

"No faith so fast," quoth she, "but flesh does
pair."¹⁰

"Flesh may impair," quoth he, "but reason
can repair."

His goodly reason, and well-guided speech,
So deep did settle in her gracious thought,

¹ Applied himself.

² That part of the bit which is enclosed in the horse's
mouth.

³ Rings of the bit.

⁴ Reluctant.

⁵ Oppress.

⁶ Adapt his discourse to her mood.

⁷ The chill of pain or grief. See note 2, page 100.

That her persuaded to disclose the breach
Which love and fortune in her heart had wrought;
And said; "Fair Sir, I hope good hap hath brought
You to inquire the secrets of my grief;
Or that your wisdom will direct my thought;
Or that your prowess can me yield relief;
Then hear the story sad, which I shall tell you
brief.

"The forlorn maiden, whom your eyes have seen
The laughing stock of Fortune's mockeries,
Am th' only daughter of a king and queen,
Whose parents dear (while equal destinies
Did run about, and their felicities
The favourable heav'ns did not envy),
Did spread their rule through all the territories,
Which Pison and Euphrates floweth by,
And Gihon's golden waves do wash continually:¹¹

"Till that their cruel curs'd enemy,
A huge great dragon, horrible in sight,
Bred in the loathly lakes of Tartary,¹²
With murd'rous ravin and devouring might
Their kingdom spoil'd, and country wasted quite:
Themselves, for fear into his jaws to fall,
He forc'd to castle strong to take their flight;
Where, fast embarr'd¹³ in mighty brazen wall,
He has them now four years besieg'd to make
them thrall.

"Full many knights, adventurous and stout,
Have enterpris'd that monster to subdue:
From every coast, that heaven walks about,¹⁴
Have thither come the noble martial crew,
That famous hard achievements still pursue;
Yet never any could that garland win,
But all still shrunk; and still he greater grew:
All they, for want of faith, or guilt of sin,
The piteous prey of his fierce cruelty have been.

"At last, y-led with far-reported praise,
Which flying fame throughout the world had
spread,

Of doughty knights, whom Faery Land did raise,
That noble order hight¹⁵ of Maidenhead,
Forthwith to court of Gloriane I sped,
Of Gloriane, great queen of glory bright,
Whose kingdom's seat Cleopolis is read;¹⁶
There to obtain some such redoubted knight,
That parents dear from tyrant's pow'r deliver
might.

"It was my chance (my chance was fair and good)
There for to find a fresh unprov'd¹⁷ Knight;
Whose manly hands embrued in guilty blood
Had never been, nor ever by his might
Had thrown to ground the unregarded right:
Yet of his prowess proof he since hath made
(I witness am) in many a cruel fight;
The groaning ghosts of many a one dismay'd
Have felt the bitter dint of his avenging blade.

"And ye, the forlorn¹⁷ reliques of his pow'r,
His biting sword, and his devouring spear,
Which have endured many a dreadful stowre,¹⁸

⁸ Misfortune.

⁹ Spirit.

¹⁰ Impair it.

¹¹ Three of the rivers of Eden. See Gen. ii. 11, 12.

¹² Tartarus, hell.

¹³ Imprisoned.

¹⁴ Surrounds.

¹⁵ Called.

¹⁶ Untried in battle.

¹⁷ Lost.

¹⁸ Conflict.

Can speak his prowess, that did erst¹ you bear,
And well could rule ; now he hath left you here
To be the record of his rueful² loss,
And of my doleful disadventurous dere :³
O heavy record of the good Redcross,
Where have you left your lord, that could so
well you toss ?

“ Well hop’d I, and fair beginnings had,
That he my captive languor should redeem : ⁴
Till all unweeting ⁵ an enchanter bad
His sense abus’d, and made him to misdeem ⁶
My loyalty not such as it did seem,
That rather death desire than such despite.
Be judge, ye heav’ns, that all things right esteem,
How I him lov’d, and love with all my might !
So thought I eke of him, and think I thought
aright.

“Thenceforth me desolate he quite forsook,
To wander where wild Fortune would me lead,
And other by-ways he himself betook,
Where never foot of living wight did tread
That brought not back the baleful body dead ;
In which him chancèd false Duessa meet,
Mine only foe, mine only deadly dread ;
Who with her witchcraft, and misseeming⁷
sweet,

Inveigled him to follow her desires unmeet.
 " At last, by subtle sleights she him betray'd
 Unto his foe, a giant huge and tall ;
 Who him, disarm'd, dissolute,^s dismay'd,
 Unwares surpris'd, and with mighty mall^s
 The monster merciless him made to fall,
 Whose fall did never foe before behold :
 And now in darksome dungeon, wretched thrall,
 Remédiless, for aye he doth him hold :
 This is my cause of grief, more great than may
 be told."

Ere she had ended all, she gan to faint :
But he her comforted, and fair bespake ;
“ Certes, Madáme, ye have great cause of plaint,
That stoutest heart, I ween, could causeto quake.
But be of cheer, and comfort to you take ;
For till I have acquit ¹⁰ your captive Knight,
Assure yourself, I will you not forsake.”
His cheerful words reviv'd her cheerless sprite:
So forth they went, the Dwarf them guiding ever
right.

CANTO VIII.

*Fair Virgin, to redeem her dear,
Brings Arthur to the fight :
Who slays the Giant, wounds the Beast,
And strips Duessa quile.*

**AH me, how many perils do enfold
The righteous man, to make him daily fall,
Were not that heav'nly grace doth him uphold,
And steadfast Truth acquit¹⁰ him out of all !**

1 Before. 3 Pitiful.
2 My sad and luckless misfortune.
4 Should deliver me from my grief for the captivity
of my parents.
5 Without his suspecting it.
6 Misjudge. 7 Deception.

Her love is firm, her care continual,
So oft as he, through his own foolish pride
Or weakness, is to sinful bands made thrall :
Else should this Redcross Knight in bands have
died,
For whose deliv'rance she this prince doth
thither guide.

They sadly travell'd thus, until they came
Nigh to a castle builded strong and high :
Then cried the Dwarf, " Lo ! yonder is the same,
In which my lord, my liege, doth luckless lie
Thrall to that giant's hateful tyranny :
Therefore, dear Sir, your mightypow'rs assay."
The noble Knight alighted by and by
From lofty steed, and bade the Lady stay,
To see what end of fight should him befall that
day.

So with his squire, th' admirer ¹¹ of his might,
He march'd forth toward that castle wall ;
Whose gates he found fast shut, nor living wight
To ward the same nor answer comer's call.
Then took that squire a horn of bugle small,
Which hung adown his side in twisted gold
And tassels gay ; wide wonders over all ¹²
Of that same horn's great virtues weren told,
Which had approv'd ¹³ been in uses manifold.
Was never wight that heard that shrilling sound,
But trembling fear did feel in every vein :
Three miles it might be easy heard around,
And echoes three answer'd itself again :
No false enchantment, nor deceitful train, ¹⁴
Might once abide the terror of that blast,
But presently was void and wholly vain :
No gate so strong, no lock so firm and fast,
But with that piercing noise flew open quite, or
brast. ¹⁵

The same before the giant's gate he blew,
That all the castle quak'd from the ground,
And every door of free-will open flew.
The giant's self, dismay'd with that sound,
Where he with his Duessa dalliance found,
In haste came rushing forth from inner bow'r,
With staring count'nance stern, as one astound',¹⁶
And staggering steps, to weet ¹⁷ what sudden
stowre ¹⁸
Had wrought that horror strange, and dar'd his
dreaded power.

And after him the proud Duessa came,
High mounted on her many-headed beast ;
And every head with fiery tongue did flame,
And every head was crown'd on his crest,
And bloody-mouth'd with late cruel feast ;
That when the knight beheld, his mighty shield
Upon his manly arm he soon addrest,¹⁹
And at him fiercely flew, with courage fill'd,
And eager greediness through every member
thrill'd.

**Therewith the giant buckled him to fight,
Inflam'd with scornful wrath and high disdain,**

8 Languid.

10 Sat free.

13 Everywhere.

14 Strategem.

16 Stupefied.

18 Assault, trouble.

9 Club, mace.

11 Wondering witness.

is Tested, proved.

13 Burst.

17 Learn.

19 Adjusted.

And lifting up his dreadful club on height,¹
 All arm'd with ragged snubs² and knotty grain,
 Him thought at first encounter to have slain.
 But wise and wary was that noble peer ;
 And, lightly leaping from so monstrous main,³
 Did fair avoid the violence him near ;
 It booted not to think such thunderbolts to bear ;
 Nor shame he thought to shun so hideous might :
 The idle stroke, enforcing furious way,
 Missing the mark of his misaim'd sight,
 Did fall to ground, and with his heavy sway
 So deeply dinted in the driven clay,
 That three yards deep a furrow up did throw :
 The sad⁴ earth, wounded with so sore assay,⁵
 Did groan full grievous underneath the blow ;
 And, trembling with strange fear, did like an
 earthquake show.

As when almighty Jove, in wrathful mood,
 To wreak the guilt of mortal sins is bent,
 Hurls forth his hund'ring dart with deadly feud,⁶
 Enroll'd in flames and smould'ring dreariment,⁷
 Through riven clouds and molten firmament ;
 The fierce three-fork'd engine, making way,
 Both lofty tow'rs and highest trees hath rent,
 And all that might his angry passage stay ;
 And, shooting in the earth, casts up a mount of
 clay.

His boist'rous club, so buried in the ground,
 He could not rearen up again so light,⁸
 But that the knight him at advantage found ;
 And, while he strove his cumber'd⁹ club to
 quite¹⁰

Out of the earth, with blade all burning bright
 He smote off his left arm, which like a block
 Did fall to ground, depriv'd of native might ;
 Large streams of blood out of the trunk'd stock¹¹
 Forth gush'd, like fresh water stream from
 riven rock.

Dismay'd with so desp'rate deadly wound,
 And eke impatient of unwonted pain,
 He loudly bray'd with beastly yelling sound,
 That all the fields rebellow'd again :
 As great a noise, as when in Cimbrian¹² plain
 A herd of bulls, whom kindly¹³ rage doth sting,
 Do for the milky mothers' want complain,
 And fill the fields with troublous bellowing :
 The neighbour woods around with hollow
 murmur ring.

That when his dear Duessa heard, and saw
 The evil stound¹⁴ that danger'd her estate,
 Unto his aid she hastily did draw
 Her dreadful beast ; who, swell'n with blood of
 late,
 Came ramping forth with proud presumptuous
 gait,
 And threaten'd all his heads like flaming brands.

But him the squire made quickly to retrace,¹⁵
 Encount'ring fierce with single sword in hand ;
 And 'twixt him and his lord did like a bulwark
 stand.

The proud Duessa, full of wrathful spite
 And fierce disdain, to be affronted¹⁶ so,
 Enforc'd her purple beast with all her might,
 That stop¹⁷ out of the way to overthrow,
 Scorning the let¹⁸ of so unequal foe :
 But nathemore¹⁹ would that courageous swain
 To her yield passage, 'gainst his lord to go ;
 But with outrageous strokes did him restrain,
 And with his body barr'd the way atwixt them
 twain.

Then took the angry witch her golden cup,
 Which still she bore, replete with magic arts ;
 Death and despair did many thereof sup,
 And secret poison through their inner parts ;
 Th' eternal bale²⁰ of heavy wounded hearts :
 Which, after charms and some enchantments
 said,
 She lightly sprinkled on his weaker parts :
 Therewith his sturdy courage soon was quay'd,²¹
 And all his senses were with sudden dread dis-
 may'd.

So down he fell before the cruel beast,
 Who on his neck his bloody claws did seize,
 That life nigh crush'd out of his panting breast :
 No pow'r he had to stir, nor will to rise.
 That when the careful knight gan well advise,²²
 He lightly left the foe with whom he fought,
 And to the beast gan turn his enterprise ;
 For wondrous anguish in his heart it wrought
 To see his lov'd squire into such thralldom
 brought ;

And, high advancing his blood-thirsty blade,
 Struck one of those deform'd heads so sore,
 That of his puissance proud ensample made ;
 His monstrous scalp down to his teeth it tore,
 And that misform'd shape misshap'd more :
 A sea of blood gush'd from the gaping wound,
 That her gay garments stain'd with filthy gore,
 And overflow'd all the field around,
 That over shoes in blood he waded on the ground.

Thereat he roar'd for exceeding pain,
 That to have heard, great horror would have
 bred ;
 And, scourging th' empty air with his long
 train,²³

Through great impatience of his griev'd²⁴ head,
 His gorgeous rider from her lofty stead²⁵
 Would have cast down, and trod in dirty mire,
 Had not the giant soon her succour'd ;
 Who, all enrag'd with smart and frantic ire,
 Came hurtling²⁶ in full fierce, and forc'd the
 knight retire.

¹ High.² Force.³ Assault.⁷ Dismalness, terror.⁹ Embarrassed.¹¹ The truncated stump.¹² The Cimbri, of old time, inhabited the north of Europe—principally the portion which is now the kingdom of Denmark, and was called the Cimbris Cherson-² Knobs.⁴ Steadfast.⁶ Wrath, vengeance.⁸ Easily.¹⁰ Disengage.

see. Jutland even at the present day is famous for its herds.

¹⁴ Misfortune.¹⁶ Encountered.¹⁸ Hindrance.²⁰ Misery.²² Perceive.²³ Tail.²⁵ Station, place.¹³ Natural.¹⁵ Withdraw.¹⁷ Obstacle.¹⁹ None the more.²¹ Quelled.²⁴ Wounded²⁶ Rushing.

The force, which went in two to be disperst,
In one alone left hand¹ he now unites,
Which is through rage more strong than both
were erst;²

With which his hideous club aloft he dights,³
And at his foe with furious rigour smites,
That strongest oak might seem to overthrow:
The stroke upon his shield so heavy lights,
That to the ground it doubleth him full low:—
What mortal wight could ever bear so monstrous
blow?

And in his fall his shield, that cover'd was,
Did loose his veil by chance, and open flew;
The light whereof, that heaven's light did pass,
Such blazing brightness through the air threw,
That eye might not the same endure to view.
Which when the giant spied with staring eye,
He down let fall his arm, and soft withdrew
His weapon huge, that heav'd was on high
For to have slain the man that on the ground did
lie.

And eke the fruitful-headed⁴ beast, amaz'd
At flashing beams of that sunshiny shield,
Became stark blind, and all his senses dar'd,⁵
That down he tumbled on the dirty field,
And seem'd himself as conquer'd to yield.
Whom when his mistress proud perceiv'd to fall,
While yet his feeble feet for faintness reel'd,
Unto the giant loudly she gan call;
"O! help, Orgoglio; help, or else we perish all!"

At her so piteous cry was much mov'd
Her champion stout; and, for to aid his friend,
Again his wonted angry weapon prov'd:⁶
But all in vain; for he has read his end
In that bright shield, and all his forces spend
Themselves in vain: for, since that glancing
sight,

He hath no pow'r to hurt nor to defend.
As, where th' Almighty's lightning brand does
light,
It dims the dar'd eyne, and daunts the senses
quite.

Whom when the Prince to battle new addrest,
And threat'ning high his dreadful stroke, did see,
His sparkling blade about his head he blest,⁷
And smote off quite his left leg by the knee,
That down he tumbled: as an aged tree,
High growing on the top of rocky cliff,⁸
Whose heart-strings with keen steel nigh
heaven be;
The mighty trunk, half rent with ragged rift,
Doth roll adown the rocks, and fall with fearful
drift.

Or as a castle, rear'd high and round,
By subtle engines⁹ and malicious sleight
Is undermin'd from the lowest ground,
And, her foundation forc'd and feebl'd quite,
At last down falls; and with her heap'd height
Her hasty ruin does more heavy make,
And yields itself unto the victor's might:

¹ In a single hand left to him.

² Before.

³ Many-headed.

⁴ Tried.

⁵ Cliff.

⁶ Raises.

⁷ Confused.

⁸ Brandished.

⁹ Contrivances, stratagema.

Such was this giant's fall, that seem'd to shake
The steadfast globe of earth, as¹⁰ it for fear did
quake.

The knight then, lightly leaping to the prey,
With mortal steel him smote again so sore,
That headless his unwieldy body lay,
All wallow'd in his own foul bloody gore,
Which flow'd from his wounds in wondrous
store.

But, soon as breath out of his breast did pass,
That huge great body which the giant bore
Was vanish'd quite; and of that monstrous mass
Was nothing left, but like an empty bladder was.

Whose grievous fall when false Duessa spied,
Her golden cup she cast unto the ground,
And crown'd mitre rudely threw aside;
Such piercing grief her stubborn heart did
wound,

That she could not endure that doleful stound;¹¹
But, leaving all behind her, fled away:
The light-foot squire her quickly turn'd around,
And, by hard means enforcing her to stay,
So brought unto his lord, as his deserv'd prey.

The royal Virgin, which beheld from far,
In pensive plight and sad perplexity,
The whole achievement of this doubtful war,
Came running fast to greet his victory,
With sober gladness and mild modesty;
And, with sweet joyous cheer,¹² him thus be-
spoke;

"Fair branch of nobless, flower of chivalry,
That with your worth the world amaz'd make,
How shall I quite¹³ the pains ye suffer for my
sake?

"And you,¹⁴ fresh bud of virtue springing fast,
Whom these sad eyes saw nigh unto death's door,
What hath poor virgin for such peril past
Wherewith you to reward? Accept therefore
My simple self, and service evermore.
And He that high does sit, and all things see
With equal eye, their merits to restore,
Behold what ye this day have done for me;
And, what I cannot quite,¹⁵ requite with usury!

"But since the heav'n, and your fair hand-
ling,¹⁶
Have made you master of the field this day;
Your fortune master eke with governing,¹⁷
And, well begun, end all so well, I pray!
Nor let that wicked woman scape away;
For she it is that did my lord bethrall,¹⁸
My dearest lord, and deep in dungeon lay;
Where he his better days hath wasted all:
O hear, how piteous he to you for aid does call!"

Forthwith he gave in charge unto his squire
That scarlet whore to keepen carefully;
While he himself, with greedy great desire,
Into the castle enter'd forcibly,
Where living creature none he did espy:
Then gan he loudly through the house to call;
But no man ear'd to answer to his cry:

¹⁰ As if.

¹¹ Countenance.

¹² The squire.

¹³ Master also your fortune by prudent use of your
success.

¹⁴ Calamity.

¹⁵ Recompense.

¹⁶ Conduct.

¹⁷ Enslave.

There reign'd a solemn silence over all ;
Nor voice was heard, nor wight was seen, in
bow'r or hall !

At last, with creeping crooked pace, forth came
An old, old man, with beard as white as snow ;
That on a staff his feeble steps did frame,
And guide his weary gait both to and fro ;
For his eyesight him fail'd long ago :
And on his arm a bunch of keys he bore,
The which, unused, rust did overgrow :
Those were the keys of every inner door ;
But he could not them use, but kept them still
in store.

But very uncouth sight was to behold
How he did fashion his untoward¹ pace ;
For, as he forward mov'd his footing old,
So backward still was turn'd his wrinkled face :
Unlike to men, who ever, as they trace,²
Both feet and face one way are wont to lead.
This was the ancient keeper of that place,
And foster-father of the giant dead ;
His name Ignaro³ did his nature right ahead.⁴

His rev'rend hairs and holy gravity
The knight much honour'd, as beseem'd well ;
And gently ask'd where all the people be
Which in that stately building wont to dwell :
Who answer'd him full soft, *He could not tell*.
Again he ask'd, where that same knight was laid
Whom great Orgoglio, with his puissance fell,
Had made his captive thrall :⁵ again he said,
He could not tell ; nor ever other answer made.

Then ask'd he, which way he in might pass :
He could not tell, again he answer'd.
Thereat the courteous knight displeas'd was,
And said ; " Old sire, it seems thou hast not read⁶
How ill it sits with⁷ that same silver head
In vain to mock, or mock'd in vain to be :
But if thou be, as thou art portray'd
With Nature's pen, in age's grave degree,
Ahead⁸ in graver wise what I demand of thee."

His answer likewise was, *He could not tell*.
Whose senseless speech, and doted ignorance,
When as the noble Prince had mark'd well,
He guess'd his nature by his countenance ;⁹
And calm'd his wrath with goodly temperance.
Then, to him stepping, from his arm did reach
Those keys, and made himself free entrance.
Each door he open'd without any breach :
There was no bar to stop, nor foe him to im-
peach.¹⁰

There all within full rich array'd he found,
With royal arras, and resplendent gold,
And did with store of every thing abound,
That greatest prince's presence might behold.
But all the floor (too filthy to be told)
With blood of guiltless babes, and innocent true,
Which there were slain, as sheep out of the fold,

¹ Awkward, reluctant.

³ Ignorance.

⁵ Captive slave.

⁷ Becomes.

⁹ Demeanour.

¹⁰ From French, "empêcher," to prevent, hinder.

¹¹ Accursed.

¹³ Spirits.

² Walk.

⁴ Describe.

⁶ Learned.

⁸ Declare.

¹⁴ Captive ; the Redcross Knight.

Defil'd was, that dreadful was to view ;
And sacred¹¹ ashes over it were strow'd new.

And there beside of marble stone was built
An altar, carv'd with cunning imag'ry ;
On which true Christians' blood was often spilt,
And holy martyrs often done to die,¹²
With cruel malice and strong tyranny :
Whose blessed sprites,¹³ from underneath the
stone,
To God for vengeance cried continually ;
And with great grief were often heard to groan,
That hardest heart would bleed to hear their
piteous moan.

Through every room he sought, and every bow'r ;
But nowhere could he find that woeful thrall.¹⁴
At last he came unto an iron door,
That fast was lock'd ; but key found not at all
Amongst that bunch to open it withal ;
But in the same a little grate was pight,¹⁵
Through which he sent his voice, and loud did call
With all his pow'r, to weet¹⁶ if living wight
Were hous'd therewithin, whom he enlargen¹⁷
might.

Therewith an hollow, dreary, murmuring voice
These piteous plaints and dolours did resound ;
" O ! who is that which brings me happy choice
Of death, that here lie dying every stound,¹⁸
Yet live perforce in baleful darkness bound ?
For now three moons have chang'd thrice their
hue,

And have been thrice hid underneath the ground,
Since I the heaven's cheerful face did view :
O, welcome, thou that dost of death bring tid-
ings true ! "

Which when that champion heard, with piercing
point

Of pity dear his heart was thrill'd sore ;
And trembling horror ran through every joint,
For ruth¹⁹ of gentle knight so foul forlore :²⁰
Which shaking off, he rent that iron door
With furious force and indignation fell ;
Where enter'd in, his foot could find no floor,
But all a deep descent, as dark as hell,
That breath'd forth a filthy baneful smell.

But neither darkness foul, nor filthy bands,
Nor noxious²¹ smell, his purpose could withhold
(Entire affection hateth nicer hands²²),
But that with constant zeal and courage bold,
After long pains and labours manifold,
He found the means that prisoner up to rear ;
Whose feeble thighs, unable to uphold
His pin'd corse,²³ him scarce to light could bear ;
A rueful spectacle of death and ghastly drear.²⁴

His sad dull eyes, deep sunk in hollow pits,
Could not endure th' unwonted sun to view ;
His bare thin cheeks, for want of better bits,²⁵
And empty sides deceiv'd²⁶ of their due,

¹⁵ Fixed.

¹⁷ Liberate.

¹⁹ Pity.

²¹ Loathsome.

²² Earnest resolution, or all-absorbing love, does not
halt for fastidiousness or delicacy.

²³ Wasted body.

²⁵ Food.

¹⁶ Know.

¹⁸ Moment.

²⁰ Forlorn, undone.

²⁴ Wretchedness.

²⁶ Defrauded.

Could make a stony heart his hap to rue ;¹
His raw-bone arms, whose mighty brawn'd
bow'rs²

Were wont to rive steel plates, and helmets hew,
Were clean consum'd ; and all his vital pow'rs
Decay'd ; and all his flesh shrunk up like
wither'd flow'rs.

Whom when his lady saw, to him she ran
With hasty joy : to see him made her glad,
And sad to view his visage pale and wan ;
Who erst³ in flow'rs of freshest youth was clad.
Then, when her well of tears she wasted⁴ had,
She said ; " Ah, dearest Lord ! what evil star
On you hath frown'd, and pour'd his influence
bad,

That of yourself ye thus berobb'd⁵ are,
And this misseeming hue your manly looks doth
mar ?

" But welcome now, my lord, in weal or woe,
Whose presence I have lack'd too long a day :
And fie on Fortune, mine avow'd foe,
Whose wrathful wrecks⁶ themselves do now
allay,

And for these wrongs shall treble penance pay
Of treble good : good grows of evil's prefe."⁷
The cheerless man, whom sorrow did dismay,
Had no delight to treaten of his grief ;
His long-endur'd famine needed more relief.

" Fair Lady," then said that victorious knight,
" The things that grievous were to do or bear,
Them to renew, I wot, breeds no delight ;
Best music breeds dislike in loathing ear :
But th' only good, that grows of pass'd fear,
Is to be wise, and ware of like again.
This day's ensample hath this lesson dear
Deep written in my heart with iron pen,
*That bliss may not abide in state of mortal
men.*

" Henceforth, Sir Knight, take to you wonted
strength,
And master these mishaps with patient might :
Lo ! where your foe lies stretch'd in monstrous
length ;
And lo ! that wicked woman in your sight,
The root of all your care and wretched plight,
Now in your pow'r, to let⁸ her live, or die."
" To do⁹ her die," quoth Una, " were despite,
And shame t' avenge so weak an enemy ;
But spoil her of her scarlet robe, and let her
fly."

So, as she bade, that witch they disarray'd,
And robb'd of royal robes, and purple pall,
And ornaments that richly were display'd ;
Nor spar'd they to strip her naked all.
Then, when they had despoil'd her tire and
caul,⁹

Such as she was, their eyes might her behold,
That her misshap'd parts did them appal ;

¹ To pity his fate.

² Muscles ; so poetically entitled from their rounded
or arched appearance.

⁴ Exhausted, completely shed.

⁶ Revenges.

⁷ Proof.

⁹ Tiara and head-dress ; perhaps, as both words are

³ Before.

⁵ Robbed.

⁸ Make.

A loathly, wrinkled hag, ill-favour'd, old,
Whose secret filth good manners biddeth not be
told.

Her crafty head was altogether bald,
And, as in hate of honourable eld,¹⁰
Was overgrown with scurf and filthy scald ;¹¹
Her teeth out of her rotten gums were fell'd,¹²
And her sour breath abominably smell'd ;
Her dried dugs, like bladders lacking wind,
Hung down, and filthy matter from them well'd ;
Her wrizzled¹³ skin, as rough as maple rind,
So scabby was, that would have loath'd all
woman kind.

Her nether parts, the shame of all her kind,
My chaster Muse for shame doth blush to write :
But at her rump she growing had behind
A fox's tail, with dung all foully dight :
And eke her feet most monstrous were in sight ;¹⁴
For one of them was like an eagle's claw,
With griping talons arm'd to greedy fight ;
The other like a bear's uneven paw :
More ugly shape yet never living creature saw.

Which when the knights beheld, amaz'd they
were,

And wonder'd at so foul deform'd wight.
" Such, then," said Una, " as she seemeth here,
Such is the face of Falsehood ; such the sight
Of foul Duesse, when her borrow'd light
Is laid away, and counterfeisance¹⁵ known."
Thus when they had the witch disrob'd quite,
And all her filthy feature open shown,
They let her go at will, and wander ways un-
known.

She, flying fast from heaven's hated face,
And from the world that her discover'd wide,
Fled to the wasteful wilderness apace,
From living eyes her open shame to hide ;
And lurk'd in rocks and caves, long unespied.
But that fair crew¹⁶ of knights, and Una fair,
Did in that castle afterwards abide,
To rest themselves, and weary powers repair :
Where store they found of all that dainty was
and rare.

CANTO IX.

His loves and lineage Arthur tells :

The knights knit friendly bands :

Sir Trevisan flies from Despair,

Whom Redcross Knight withstands.

O ! GOODLY golden chain, wherewith y-fer¹⁷
The virtues link'd are in lovely wise ;
And noble minds of yore alli'd were
In brave pursuit of chivalrous emprise,
That none did other's safety despise,
Nor aid envy¹⁸ to him in need that stands ;
But friendly each did other's praise devise

used for clothing or covering generally, the phrase has
here the force of "utterly."

¹⁰ Old age.

¹² Fallen.

¹⁴ To see.

¹⁷ Together.

¹¹ Scab.

¹³ Wrinkled.

¹⁵ Counterfeiting.

¹⁶ Company.

¹⁸ Begudge.

How to advance with favourable hands,
As this good Prince redeem'd the Redcross
Knight from bands.¹

Who when their powers, impair'd through
labour long,
With due repast they had recur'd² well,
And that weak captive wight now wax'd strong,
Them list no longer there at leisure dwell,
But forward fare, as their adventures fell:
But, ere they parted, Una fair besought
That stranger knight his name and nation tell;
Lest so great good, as he for her had wrought,
Should die unknown, and buried be in thankless
thought.

"Fair Virgin," said the Prince, "ye me require
A thing without the compass of my wit:
For both the lineage, and the certain sire,
From which I sprung, from me are hidden yet.
For all so soon as life did me admit
Into this world, and shew'd heaven's light,
From mother's pap I taken was unfit,
And straight deliver'd to a Faery knight,
To be upbrought in gentle thews³ and martial
might.

"Unto old Timon⁴ he me brought belive;⁵
Old Timon, who in youthly years hath been
In warlike feats th' expertest man alive,
And is the wisest now on earth, I ween:
His dwelling is, low in a valley green,
Under the foot of Rauran⁶ mossy hoar,
From whence the river Dee, as silver clean,
His tumbling billows rolls with gentle roar;
There all my days he train'd me up in virtuous
lore.

"Thither the great magician Merlin came,
As was his use, oft-times to visit me;
For he had charge my discipline to frame,
And tutor's nurture⁷ to oversee.
Him oft and oft I ask'd in privy,
Of what loins and what lineage I did spring.
Whose answer bade me still assur'd be
That I was son and heir unto a king,
As time in her just term the truth to light
should bring."

"Well worthy imp,"⁸ said then the Ladygent,⁹
"And pupil fit for such a tutor's hand!
But what adventure, or what high intent,
Hath brought you hither into Faery Land,
Aread,¹⁰ Prince Arthur, crown of martial band?"
"Full hard it is," quoth he, "to read aright
The course of heavenly cause, or understand
The secret meaning of th' Eternal Might,
That rules men's ways, and rules the thoughts
of living wight.

"For whether He, through fatal deep foresight,
Me hither sent, for cause to me unguess'd;

Or that fresh bleeding wound which day and
night

Whilom¹¹ doth rankle in my riven breast,
With forc'd fury following his behest,
Me hither brought by ways yet never found;
You to have help'd I hold myself yet blest."
"Ah! courteous Knight," quoth she, "what
secret wound
Could ever find to grieve the gentlest heart on
ground?"¹²

"Dear Dame," quoth he, "you sleeping sparks
awake,
Which, troubled once, into huge flames will
grow;
Nor ever will their fervent fury slake,
Till living moisture into smoke do flow,
And wasted life do lie in ashes low.
Yet sithens¹³ silence lesseneth not my fire,—
But, told, it flames; and, hidden, it does glow,—
I will reveal what ye so much desire:
Ah! Love, lay down thy bow, the while I may
respire.

"It was in freshest flow'r of youthly years,
When courage first does creep in manly chest;
Then first that coal of kindly¹⁴ heat appears
To kindle love in ev'ry living breast:
But me had warn'd old Timon's wise behest,
Those creeping flames by reason to subdue,
Before their rage grew to so great unrest,
As miserable lovers use to rue,
Which still wax old in woe, while woe still
waxeth new.

"That idle name of love, and lover's life,
As loss of time, and virtue's enemy,
I ever scorn'd, and joy'd to stir up strife
In midst of their mournful tragedy;
Ay wont to laugh when them I heard to cry,
And blow the fire which them to ashes brent:¹⁵
Their god himself, griev'd at my liberty,
Shot many a dart at me with fierce intent;
But I them ward'd all with wary government.¹⁶

"But all in vain; no fort can be so strong,
Nor fleshly breast can arm'd be so sound,
But will at last be won with battery long,
Or unawares at disadvantage found:
Nothing is sure that grows on earthly ground.
And who most trusts in arm of fleshly might,
And boasts in beauty's chain not to be bound,
Doth soonest fall in disadventurous fight,
And yields his captive¹⁷ neck to victor's most
despite.¹⁸

"Ensample make of him, your hapless joy,
And of myself, now mated¹⁹ as ye see;
Whose prouder vaunt that proud avenging boy
Did soon pluck down, and curb'd my liberty.
For on a day, prick'd²⁰ forth with jollity
Of looser life and heat of hardiment,²¹

¹ Captivity.

² Restored, recruited.

³ Noble qualities.

⁴ Honour—from the Greek, *τιμαω*, I honour.

⁵ Immediately.

⁶ "Rauran Vaur" is a hill in Merionethshire.

⁷ Nurture, training; French, "nourriture."

⁸ Youth.

⁹ Noble, courteous.

¹⁰ Declare.

¹¹ Now for a long time.

¹² On earth.

¹³ Natural.

¹⁴ Management.

¹⁵ Utmost severity.

¹⁶ Spurred.

¹⁷ Since.

¹⁸ Burned.

¹⁹ Captive.

²⁰ Overmatched.

²¹ Boldness.

Ranging the forest wide on courser free,
The fields, the floods, the heav'ns, with one consent,
Did seem to laugh on me, and favour mine intent.

"Forwearied with my sports, I did alight
From lofty steed, and down to sleep me laid:
The verdant grass my couch did goodly dight,¹
And pillow was my helmet fair display'd:
While every sense the humour sweet embay'd,²
And alumb'ring soft my heart did steal away,
Me seem'd, by my side a royal maid
Her dainty limbs full softly down did lay;
So fair a creature yet saw never sunny day.

"Most goodly glee³, and lovely blandishment
She to me made, and bade me love her dear;
For dearly sure her love was to me bent,
As, when just time expired, should appear.
But, whether dreams delude, or true it were,
Was never heart so ravish'd with delight,
Nor living man like words did ever hear,
As she to me deliver'd all that night;
And at her parting said, she Queen of Faeries hight.

"When I awoke, and found her place devoid,⁴
And naught but press'd grass where she had lien,⁵
I sorrow'd all so much as erst⁶ I joy'd,
And wash'd all her place with wat'ry eyne.
From that day forth I lov'd that face divine;
From that day forth I cast in careful mind
To seek her out with labour and long time,⁷
And never vow'd to rest till her I find:
Nine months I seek in vain, yet n'ill⁸ that vow unbind."

Thus as he spake, his visage wax'd pale,
And change of hue great passion did bewray;
Yet still he strove to cloak his inward bale,⁹
And hide the smoke that did his fire display;
Till gentle Una thus to him gan say:
"O happy Queen of Faeries, that hast found,
Mongst many, one that with his prowess may
Defend thine honour, and thy foes confound!
True loves are often sown, but seldom grow on ground."

"Thine, O! then," said the gentle Redcross Knight,

"Next to that lady's love, shall be the place,
O fairest Virgin, full of heav'nly light,
Whose wondrous faith, exceeding earthly race,
Was firmest fix'd in mine extremest case.
And you, my lord, the patron of my life,
Of that great Queen may well gain worthy grace;
For only worthy you through prowess' prefe,¹⁰
If living man might worthy be, to be her life."¹¹

So diversely discoursing of their loves,
The golden sun his glist'ning head gan shew;
And sad remembrance now the Prince amoves
With fresh desire his voyage to pursue:
Als¹² Una yearn'd her travel to renew.

1 Prepare, deck.

2 Delight.

3 Laid.

4 Otherwise "teen" or "teens;" anxiety.

5 Will not.

6 Proof of courage.

7 Bathed.

8 Empty.

9 Before.

10 Anguish.

11 Love.

Then those two knights, fast friendship for to bind,

And love establish each to other true,
Gave goodly gifts, the signs of grateful mind,
And eke, as pledges firm, right hands together join'd.

Prince Arthur gave a box of diamonds sure,
Embow'd¹³ with gold and gorgeous ornament,
Wherein were clos'd few drops of liquor pure,
Of wondrous worth, and virtue excellent,
That any wound could heal incontinent.¹⁴
Which to requite, the Redcross Knight him gave
A book, wherein his Saviour's Testament
Was writ with golden letters rich and brave;
A work of wondrous grace, and able souls to save.

Thus be they parted; Arthur on his way
To seek his love, and th' other for to fight
With Una's foe, that all her realms did prey.¹⁵
But she, now weighing the decay'd plight
And shrunken sinews of her chosen Knight,
Would not a while her forward course pursue,
Nor bring him forth in face of dreadful fight,
Till he recover'd had his former hue:
For him to be yet weak and weary well she knew.

So as they travell'd, lo! they gan espy
An arm'd knight toward them gallop fast,
That seem'd from some fear'd foe to fly,
Or other grisly thing, that him aghast.¹⁶
Still, as he fled, his eye was backward cast,
As if his fear¹⁷ still follow'd him behind:
Als' flew his steed, as he his bands had brast,¹⁸
And with his wing'd heels did tread the wind,
As he had been a foal of Pegasus his kind.

Nigh as he drew, they might perceive his head
To be unarm'd, and curl'd uncomb'd hairs
Upstaring stiff, dismay'd with uncouth dread:
Nor drop of blood in all his face appears,
Nor life in limb; and, to increase his fears,
In foul reproach of knighthood's fair degree,
About his neck a hempen rope he wears,
That with his glist'ning arms does ill agree:
But he of rope or arms has now no memory.

The Redcross Knight toward him cross'd fast,
To weet¹⁹ what mister wight²⁰ was so dismay'd:
There him he finds all senseless and aghast,¹⁶
That of himself he seem'd to be afraid;
Whom hardly he from flying forward stay'd,
Till he these words to him deliver might:
"Sir Knight, aread²¹ who hath ye thus array'd,
And eke from whom make ye this hasty flight?
For never knight I saw in such misseeming plight."

He answer'd naught at all; but adding new
Fear to his first amazement, staring wide
With stony eyes and heartless²² hollow hue,
Astonish'd stood, as one that had espied
Infernal Furies with their chains untied.
Him yet again, and yet again, bespake
The gentle Knight; who naught to him replied;

12 Also.

13 Immediately.

14 Terrified.

15 Burst.

16 Manner of man.

17 Timid, fearful.

18 Arched over, embossed.

19 Ravage.

20 The cause of his fear.

21 Learn.

22 Declare.

But, trembling every joint, did inly quake,
And falt'ring tongue at last these words seem'd
forth to shake ;

"For God's dear love, Sir Knight, do me not
stay ;¹

For lo ! he comes, he comes fast after me !"
Eft,² looking back, would fain have run away ;
But he him forc'd to stay, and tellen free
The secret cause of his perplexity :
Yet nathemore³ by his bold hearty speech
Could his blood-frozen heart embolden'd be,
But through his boldness rather fear did reach ;
Yet forc'd, at last he made through silence sud-
den breach :

"And am I now in safety sure," quoth he,
"From him that would have forc'd me to die?
And is the point of death now turn'd from me,
That I may tell this hapless history?"
"Fear naught," quoth he, "no danger now is
nigh."

"Then shall I you recount a rueful case,"
Said he, "the which with this unlucky eye
I late beheld ; and, had not greater grace
Me reft from it, had been partaker of the place."⁴

"I lately chanc'd (would I had never chanc'd !)
With a fair knight to keopen company,
Sir Terwin hight, that well himself advanc'd
In all affairs, and was both bold and free ;
But not so happy as might happy be :
He lov'd, as was his lot, a lady gent,⁵
That him again lov'd i the least degree ;
For she was proud, and of too high intent,⁶
And joy'd to see her lover anguish and lament :

"From whom returning, sad and comfortless,
As on the way together we did fare,
We met that villain (God from him me bless !⁷)
That curs'd wight, from whom I escap'd whilére,⁸
A man of hell, that calls himself Despair :
Who first us greets, and after fair areads⁹
Of tidings strange, and of adventures rare :
So creeping close, as snake in hidden weeds,
Inquireth of our states, and of our knightly deeds.

"Which when he knew, and felt our feeble hearts,
Emboss'd with bale¹⁰ and bitter biting grief,
Which love had lanc'd with his deadly darts ;
With wounding words, and terms of foul reпреse,¹¹
He pluck'd from us all hope of due relief,
That erst¹² us held in love of ling'ring life :
Then hopeless, heartless, gan the cunning thief
Persuade us die, to stint all farther strife ;
To me he lent this rope, to him a rusty knife :

"With which sad instrument of hasty death,
That woeful lover, loathing longer light,
A wide way made to let forth living breath.
But I, more fearful or more lucky wight,
Dismay'd with that deform'd dismal sight,
Fled fast away, half dead with dying fear ;
Nor yet assur'd of life by you, Sir Knight,

¹ Make me not linger.

² Then.

³ None the more.
⁴ Had shared the same fate—in on the same place
—as the companion whose suicide he is about to de-
scribe.

⁵ Mind.

⁶ A short time ago.

⁷ Noble.

⁸ Deliver.

⁹ Inform.

Whose like infirmity like chance may bear :
But God you never let his charm'd speeches
hear !"

"How may a man," said he, "with idle speech
Be won to spoil the castle of his health?"

"I wot,"¹³ quoth he, "whom trial late did teach,
That like would not for all this world's wealth :
His subtle tongue, like dropping honey, mel'th¹⁴
Into the heart, and searcheth every vein ;
That, ere one be aware, by secret stealth
His pow'r is reft,¹⁵ and weakness doth remain.
O never, Sir, desire to try his guileful train !"

"Certes," said he, "hence shall I never rest,
Till I that traitor's art have heard and tried :
And you, Sir Knight, whose name might I
request,

Of grace do me unto his cabin guide."

"I, that hight Trevisan," quoth he, "will ride,
Against my liking, back to do you grace :
But not for gold nor glee will I abide

By you, when ye arrive in that same place ;
For lever¹⁶ had I die than see his deadly face."

Ere long they come where that same wicked
wight

His dwelling has, low in a hollow cave,
Far underneath a craggy cliff y-pight,¹⁷
Dark, doleful, dreary, like a greedy grave,
That still for carrion carcasses doth crave :
On top whereof ay dwelt the ghastly owl,
Shrieking his baleful note, which ever drave
Far from that haunt all other cheerful fowl ;
And all about it wand'ring ghosts did wail and
howl :

And, all about, old stocks and stubs of trees,
Whereon nor fruit nor leaf was ever seen,
Did hang upon the ragged rocky knees ;¹⁸
On which had many wretches hang'd been,
Whose carcasses were scatter'd on the green,
And thrown about the cliffs. Arriv'd there,
That bare-head knight, for dread and doleful
teen,¹⁹

Would fain have fled, nor durst approachen near ;
But th' other forc'd him stay, and comforted in
fear.

That darksome cave they enter, where they find
That curs'd man, low sitting on the ground,
Musing full sadly in his sullen mind :
His greasy locks, long grown and unbound,
Disorder'd hung about his shoulders round,
And hid his face ; through which his hollow eyne
Look'd deadly dull, and star'd as astound' ;²⁰
His raw-bone cheeks, through penury and pine,²¹
Were shrunk into his jaws, as²² he did never dine.

His garment, naught but many ragged clouts,
With thorns together pinn'd and patch'd was,
The which his naked sides he wrapt abouts :
And him beside there lay upon the grass
A dreary corse, whose life away did pass,

¹⁰ Overwhelmed with misery.

¹¹ Formerly.

¹² Melteth.

¹³ Rather.

¹⁴ Projections.

¹⁵ Amazed, stupefied.

¹⁶ As if.

¹⁷ Reproach.

¹⁸ Know.

¹⁹ Taken away.

²⁰ Placed, fixed.

²¹ Trouble.

²² Decay.

All wallow'd in his own yet lukewarm blood,
That from his wound yet wellèd fresh, alas !
In which a rusty knife fast fixèd stood,
And made an open passage for the gushing flood.

Which piteous spectacle, approving true
The woeful tale that Trevisan had told,
When as the gentle Redcross Knight did view,
With fiery zeal he burn'd in courage bold
Him to avenge, before his blood were cold ;
And to the villain said ; " Thou damnèd wight,
The author of this fact we here behold,
What justice can but judge against thee right,
With thine own blood to price¹ his blood, here
shed in sight ? "

" What frantic fit," quoth he,² " hath thus
distraught

Thee, foolish man, so rash a doom³ to give ?
What justice ever other judgment taught,
But he should die, who merits not to live ?
None else to death this man despairing drive
But his own guilty mind, deserving death.
Is then unjust to each his due to give ?
Or let him die, that loatheth living breath ?
Or let him die at ease, that liveth here unneth ?⁴

" Who travels by the weary wand'ring way,
To come unto his wishèd home in haste,
And meets a flood, that doth his passage stay ;
Is not great grace to help him over past,
Or free his feet that in the mire stick fast ?
Most envious man, that grieves at neighbour's
good ;

And fond,⁵ that joyest in the woe thou hast ;
Why wilt not let him pass, that long hath stood
Upon the bank, yet wilt thyself not pass the
flood ?

" He there does now enjoy eternal rest
And happy ease, which thou dost want and crave,
And farther from it daily wanderest :
What if some little pain the passage have,
That makes frail flesh to fear the bitter wave ;
Is not short pain well borne, that brings long ease,
And lays the soul to sleep in quiet grave ?
Sleep after toil, port after stormy seas,
Ease after war, death after life, does greatly
please."

The Knight much wonder'd at his sudden wit,
And said ; " The term of life is limited,
Nor may a man prolong nor shorten it :
The soldier may not move from watchful stead,⁶
Nor leave his stand until his captain bid."

" Who life did limit by almighty doom,"⁷
Quoth he, " knows best the terms establishèd ;
And he, that points⁸ the sentinel his room,⁹
Doth license him depart at sound of morning
drum.

" Is not His deed, whatever thing is done
In heav'n and earth ? Did not He all create
To die again ? All ends, that was begun :
Their times in His eternal book of fate
Are written sure, and have their certain date.

Who then can strive with strong necessity,
That holds the world in his still changing state ;
Or shun the death ordain'd by destiny ?
When hour of death is come, let none ask
whence nor why.

" The longer life, I wot,¹⁰ the greater sin ;
The greater sin, the greater punishment :
All those great battles, which thou boasts to win
Through strife, and bloodshed, and avengement,
Now prais'd, hereafter dear thou shalt repent :
For life must life, and blood must blood, repay.
Is not enough thy evil life forespent ?¹¹
For he that once hath missèd the right way,
The farther he doth go, the farther he doth stray ;

" Then do no farther go, no farther stray ;
But here lie down, and to thy rest betake,
Th' ill to prevent, that life ensuen¹² may.
For what hath life, that may it lovèd make,
And gives not rather cause it to forsake ?
Fear, sickness, age, loss, labour, sorrow, strife,
Pain, hunger, cold that makes the heart to quake ;
And ever fickle Fortune rageth rife ;
All which, and thousands more, do make a
loathsome life.

" Thou, wretched man, of death hast greatest
need,

If in true balance thou wilt weigh thy state ;
For never knight that darèd warlike deed
More luckless disadvantages¹³ did amate :¹⁴
Witness the dungeon deep, wherein of late
Thy life shut up for death so oft did call ;
And though good luck prolongèd hath thy date,
Yet death then would the like mishaps forestall,
Into the which hereafter thou may'st happen fall.

" Why then dost thou, O man of sin, desire
To draw thy days forth to their last degree ?
Is not the measure of thy sinful hire
High heap'd up with huge iniquity,
Against the day of wrath, to burden thee ?
Is not enough, that to this Lady mild
Thou falsèd¹⁵ hast thy faith with perjury,
And sold thyself to serve Duesa vild,¹⁶
With whom in all abuse thou hast thyself defil'd ?

" Is not he just, that all this doth behold
From highest heav'n, and bears an equal eye ?
Shall He thy sins up in His knowledge fold,
And guilty be of thine impiety ?
Is not His law, ' Let every sinner die,'
' Die shall all flesh ? ' What then must needs
be done ?

Is it not better to die willingly,
Than linger till the glass be all out run ?
Death is the end of woes : die soon, O Faery's
son."

The Knight was much enmovèd with his speech,
That as a sword's point through his heart did
pierce,

And in his conscience made a secret breach,
Well knowing true all that he did rehearse,
And to his fresh remembrance did reverse¹⁷

¹ Pay for.² Despair.³ Judgment.⁴ With difficulty.⁵ Foolish.⁶ Station.⁷ Decree.⁸ Appoints.⁹ Place.¹⁰ Deem.¹¹ Already spent.¹² Follow.¹³ Misfortunes.¹⁴ Subdue, abase.¹⁵ Violated.¹⁶ Vile.¹⁷ Recall.

The ugly view of his deform'd crimes ;
That all his manly pow'r it did dispense,
As¹ he were charm'd with enchanted rhymes ;
That oftentimes he quak'd, and fainted often-
times.

In which amazement when the miscreant
Perceiv'd him to waver weak and frail,
While trembling horror did his conscience daunt,
And hellish anguish did his soul assail ;
To drive him to despair, and quite to quail,
He shew'd him, painted in a table² plain,
The damn'd ghosts that do in torments wail,
And thousand fends, that do³ them endless pain
With fire and brimstone, which for ever shall
remain.

The sight whereof so thoroughly him dismay'd,
That naught but death before his eyes he saw,
And ever burning wrath before him laid.
By righteous sentence of th' Almighty's law.
Then gan the villain him to overcraw,⁴
And brought unto him swords, ropes, poison, fire,
And all that might him to perdition draw ;
And bade him choose, what death he would
desire :
For death was due to him, that had provok'd
God's ire.

But when as none of them he saw him take,
He to him raught⁵ a dagger sharp and keen,
And gave it him in hand : his hand did quake
And tremble like a leaf of aspen green,
And troubled blood through his pale face was seen
To come and go, with tidings from the heart,
As it a running messenger had been.
At last, resolv'd to work his final smart,⁶
He lifted up his hand, that back again did start.

Which when as Una saw, through ev'ry vein
The curdled cold ran to her well of life,⁷
As in a swoon : but, soon reliv'd⁸ again,
Out of his hand she snatch'd the curs'd knife,
And threw it to the ground, enrag'd rife,⁹
And to him said ; "Fy, fy, faint-hearted
Knight !

What meanest thou by this reproachful¹⁰ strife ?
Is this the battle, which thou vaunt'st to fight
With that fire-mouth'd dragon, horrible and
bright ?

"Come, come away, frail, feeble, fleshly wight !
Nor let vain words bewitch thy manly heart,
Nor devilish thoughts dismay thy constant sprite :
In heav'nly mercies hast thou not a part ?
Why should'st thou then despair, that chosen
art ?

Where justice grows, there grows eke greater
grace,
The which doth quench the brand of hellish
smart,
And that accurs'd handwriting doth deface :
Arise, sir Knight ; arise, and leave this curs'd
place."

¹ As if.² Cause.³ Reached.⁴ Heart.⁵ Greatly.⁶ Departed.⁷ Picture.⁸ Triumph over.⁹ Pain, mischief.¹⁰ Revived.¹¹ Disgraceful.¹² He had made the same attempt.

So up he rose, and thence mounted¹¹ straight.
Which when the curi beheld, and saw his guest
Would safe depart, for all his subtle sleight,
He chose a halber from among the rest,
And with it hung himself, unaid, unblent.
But death he could not work himself thereby ;
For thousand times he so himself had drest,¹²
Yet nathelless it could not do him die,¹³
Till he should die his last, that is, eternally.

CANTO X.

*Her faithful Knight fair Una brings
To house of Holiness ;
Where he is taught repentance, and
The way to heav'nly bliss.*

WHAT man is he, that boasts of fleshly might
And vain assurance of mortality,
Which, all so soon as it doth come to fight
Against spiritual foes, yields by and by,¹⁴
Or from the field most cowardly doth fly !
Nor let the man ascribe it to his skill,
That thorough grace hath gain'd victory :
If any strength we have, it is to ill ;
But all the good is God's, both power and eke
will.

By that which lately happen'd, Una saw
That this her Knight was feeble and too faint ;
And all his sinews waxen weak and raw,
Through longimprisonment, and hard constraint,
Which he endur'd in his late restraint,
That yet he was unfit for bloody fight.
Therefore, to cherish him with diets daint,¹⁵
She cast¹⁶ to bring him where he cheeren¹⁷ might,
Till he recover'd had his late decay'd plight.

There was an ancient house not far away,
Renown'd throughout the world for sacred lore
And pure unspotted life : so well, they say,
It govern'd was, and guided evermore,
Through wisdom of a matron grave and hoar ;
Whose only joy was to relieve the needs
Of wretched souls, and help the helpless poor :
All night she spent in bidding of her beads,
And all the day in doing good and godly deeds.

Dame Oelia¹⁸ men did her call, as thought
From heav'n to come, or thither to arise ;
The mother of three daughters, well upbrought
In goodly thews¹⁹ and godly exercise :
The eldest two, most sober, chaste, and wise,
Fidelia²⁰ and Speranza,²¹ virgins were ;
Though spous'd, yet wanting wedlock's solem-
nise ;²²

But fair Charissa²³ to a lovely fere²⁴
Was link'd, and by him had many pledges dear.

Arriv'd there, the door they find fast lock'd ;
For it was warely²⁵ watch'd night and day,

¹³ Kill him.¹⁴ Delicate, dainty.¹⁵ Be entertained, nourished.¹⁶ Heavenly.¹⁷ Hope.¹⁸ Companion, husband.¹⁹ Speedily.²⁰ Thought, resolved.²¹ Faith.²² Charity.²³ Carefully.

For fear of many foes; but, when they knock'd,
The porter open'd unto them straightway.
He was an aged sire, all hoary gray,
With looks full lowly cast, and gait full slow,
Went on a staff his feeble steps to stay,
Hight Humiltá.¹ They pass in, stooping low;
For strait and narrow was the way which he
did show.

Each goodly thing is hardest to begin;
But, enter'd in, a spacious court they see,
Both plain and pleasant to be walk'd in;
Where them does meet a franklin² fair and free,
And entertains with comely courteous glee;
His name was Zeal, that him right well became:
For in his speeches and behaviour he
Did labour lively to express the same,
And gladly did them guide, till to the hall they
came.

There fairly them receives a gentle squire,
Of mild demeanour and rare courtesy,
Right cleanly clad in comely sad³ attire:
In word and deed that show'd great modesty,
And knew his good⁴ to all of each degree;
Hight Reverence: He them with speeches
meet

Does fair entreat⁵; no courting nicety,⁶
But simple, true, and eke unfeign'd sweet,
As might become a squire so great persons to
greet.

And afterwards them to his Dame he leads,
That aged dame, the Lady of the place,
Who all this while was busy at her beads;
Which done, she up arose with seemly grace,
And toward them full matronly did pace.
Where, when that fairest Una she beheld,
Whom well she knew to spring from heav'nly
race,

Her heart with joy unwonted inly swell'd,
As feeling wondrous comfort in her weaker
eld:⁷

And, her embracing, said; "O happy earth,
Whereon thy innocent feet do ever tread!
Most virtuous Virgin, born of heav'nly birth,
That, to redeem thy woeful parents' head
From tyrant's rage and ever-dying dread,⁸
Hast wander'd through the world now long a
day,

Yet ceasest not thy weary soles to lead;
What grace hath thee now hither brought this
way?

Or do thy feeble feet unweeting⁹ hither stray?

"Strange thing it is an errant knight to see
Here in this place; or any other wight,
That hither turns his steps: so few there be
That choose the narrow path, or seek the right!
All keep the broad highway, and take delight

¹ Humility.

² Gentleman. See note 34, page 20, for the precise meaning of the word.

³ Sober.

⁴ Knew his proper demeanour and conduct.

⁵ Entertain.

⁶ No trifling fastidiousness of a courtier.

⁷ Age.

⁸ Constant fear of death.

⁹ Unknowing, by mere chance.

¹⁰ Talk, tell.

¹¹ Entered, drew near.

¹² Loving.

¹³ Dazzled.

With many rather for to go astray,
And be partakers of their evil plight,
Than with a few to walk the rightest way:
O! foolish men, why haste ye to your own
decay?"

"Thy self to see, and tir'd limbs to rest,
O Matron sage," quoth she, "I hither came;
And this good Knight his way with me addrest,
Led with thy praises, and broad-blaz'd fame,
That up to heav'n is blown." The ancient Dame
Him goodly greeted in her modest guise,
And entertain'd them both, as best became,
With all the court'sies that she could devise,
Nor wanted aught to shew her bounteous or wise.

Thus as they gan of sundry things devise,¹⁰
Lo! two most goodly virgins came in place,¹¹
Y-link'd arm in arm in lovely¹² wise;
With countenance demure, and modest grace,
They number'd even steps and equal pace:
Of which the eldest, that Fidelia hight,
Like sunny beams threw from her crystal face,
That could have dar'd¹³ the rash beholder's sight,
And round about her head did shine like heaven's
light.

She was array'd all in lily white,
And in her right hand bore a cup of gold,
With wine and water fill'd up to the height,¹⁴
In which a serpent did himself enfold,
That horror made to all that did behold;
But she no whit did change her constant mood:
And in her other hand she fast did hold
A book, that was both sign'd and seal'd with
blood;¹⁵

Wherein dark things were writ, hard to be
understood.

Her younger sister, that Speranza hight,
Was clad in blue, that her bescem'd well;
Not all so cheerful seem'd she of sight
As was her sister; whether dread did dwell,
Or anguish, in her heart, is hard to tell:
Upon her arm a silver anchor lay,
Whereon she lean'd ever, as befell;
And ever up to heav'n, as she did pray,
Her steadfast eyes were bent, nor swerv'd
other way.

They, seeing Una, toward her gan wend,
Who them encounters with like courtesy;
Many kind speeches they between them spend,
And greatly joy each other for to see:
Then to the Knight with shamesac'd modesty
They turn themselves, at Una's meek request,
And him salute with well beseming glee;¹⁶
Who fair them quites,¹⁷ as him bescem'd¹⁸ best,
And goodly gan discourse of many a noble gest.¹⁹

Then Una thus; "But she, your sister dear,
The dear Charissa, where is she become?"

¹⁴ The sacramental cup, filled with wine and water to signify the mingled blood and water which streamed from the pierced side of the Saviour on the cross; the serpent coiled in the cup is probably intended to denote the conquest or destruction of the power of Satan through Christ's suffering.

¹⁵ The New Testament; or perhaps more especially the Apocalypse.

¹⁶ Pleasure.

¹⁷ Salutes in return.

¹⁸ Became.

¹⁹ Action, history.

Or wants she health, or busy is elsewhere?"
 "Ah! no," said they, "but forth she may not
 come;
 For she of late is lighten'd of her womb,
 And hath increas'd the world with one son more,
 That her to see should be but troublesome."
 "Indeed," quoth she, "that should her trouble
 sore;
 But thank'd be God, and her increase so ever-
 more!"

Then said the aged Cælia; "Dear Dame,
 And you, good Sir, I wot¹ that of your toil
 And labours long, through which ye hither came,
 Ye both forwearied be: therefore a while
 I read² you rest, and to your bow'rs recoil."³
 Then call'd she a groom, that forth him led
 Into a goodly lodge, and gan despoil
 Of puissant arms, and laid in easy bed:
 His name was Meek Obedience rightfully aræd.⁴

Now when their weary limbs with kindly rest,
 And bodies were refresh'd with due repast,
 Fair Una gan Fidelia fair request
 To have her Knight into her schoolhouse plac'd,
 That of her heav'nly learning he might taste,
 And hear the wisdom of her words divine.
 She granted, and that Knight so much agrac'd,⁵
 That she him taught celestial discipline,
 And open'd his dull eyes, that light might in
 them shine.

And that her sacred book, with blood y-writ,
 That none could read except she did them teach,
 She unto him disclos'd every whit;
 And heav'nly documents⁶ thereout did preach,
 That weaker wit of man could never reach;
 Of God; of Grace; of Justice; of Free-will;
 That wonder was to hear her goodly speech:
 For she was able with her words to kill,
 And raise again to life the heart that she did
 thrill.⁷

And, when she list pour out her larger sprite,⁸
 She would command the hasty sun to stay,
 Or backward turn his course from heaven's
 height:

Sometimes great hosts of men she could dismay;
 Dry-shod to pass she parts the floods in tway;
 And eke huge mountains from their native seat
 She would command themselves to bear away,⁹
 And throw in raging sea with roaring threat:
 Almighty God her gave such pow'r and puis-
 sance¹⁰ great.

The faithful Knight now grew in little space,
 By hearing her, and by her sisters' lore,
 To such perfection of all heav'nly grace,
 That wretched world he gan for to abhor,
 And mortal life gan loathe as thing forlorn,¹¹
 Griev'd with remembrance of his wicked ways,
 And prick'd with anguish of his sins so sore,

¹ Know.² Retire to your chambers.³ Declared.⁴ Teachings, doctrines.⁵ Spirit.⁶ Matt. xvii. 20: "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove⁷ Counsel.⁸ Favoured.⁹ Pierce.

That he desir'd to end his wretched days:
 So much the dart of sinful guilt the soul dis-
 may'd!

But wise Speranza gave him comfort sweet,
 And taught him how to take assur'd hold
 Upon her silver anchor, as was meet;
 Else had his sins so great and manifold
 Made him forget all that Fidelia told.
 In this distress'd doubtful agony,
 When him his dearest Una did behold
 Disdaining life, desiring leave to die,
 She found herself assail'd with great perplexity;

And came to Cælia to declare her smart;
 Who, well acquainted with that common plight
 Which sinful horror works in wounded heart,
 Her wisely comforted all that she might,
 With goodly counsel and advisement right;
 And straightway sent with careful diligence,
 To fetch a leech,¹² the which had great insight
 In that disease of griev'd conscience,
 And well could cure the same; his name was
 Patience.

Who, coming to that soul-diseas'd Knight,
 Could hardly him entreat to tell his grief:
 Which known, and all that noy'd¹³ his heavy
 sprite

Well search'd, eftsoons he gan apply relief
 Of salves and medicines which had passing
 prefe;¹⁴

And thereto added words of wondrous might:
 By which to ease he him recur'd brief,¹⁵
 And much assuag'd the passion of his plight,¹⁶
 That he his pain endur'd, as seeming now more
 light.

But yet the cause and root of all his ill,
 Inward corruption and infected sin,
 Not purg'd nor heal'd, behind remain'd still,
 And fest'ring sore did rankle yet within,
 Close creeping 'twixt the marrow and the skin:
 Which to extirp,¹⁷ he laid him privily
 Down in a darksome lowly place far in,
 Where as he meant his corrosives t' apply,
 And with strait¹⁸ diet tame his stubborn malady.

In ashes and sackcloth he did array
 His dainty corse, proud humours to abate;
 And dieted with fasting every day,
 The swelling of his wounds to mitigate;
 And made him pray both early and eke late:
 And ever, as superfluous flesh did rot,
 Amendment ready still at hand did wait
 To pluck it out with pincers fiery hot,
 That soon in him was left no one corrupted jot.

And bitter Penance, with an iron whip,
 Was wont him once to disple¹⁹ every day:
 And sharp Remorse his heart did prick and nip,
 That drops of blood thence like a well did play:
 And sad Repentance us'd to embay²⁰

hence to yonder place; and it shall remove: and no-
 thing shall be impossible unto you."

¹⁰ Might.¹¹ Physician.¹² Surpassing effect.¹³ The sufferings of his condition.¹⁴ Strict.¹⁵ Undone, lost.¹⁶ Injured, troubled.¹⁷ Quickly restored.¹⁸ Root out.¹⁹ Discipline, chastise.²⁰ Bathe.

His body in salt water smarting sore,
The filthy blots of sin to wash away.
So in short space they did to health restore
The man that would not live, but erst lay at
death's door.

In which his torment often was so great,
That like a lion he would cry and roar ;
And rend his flesh ; and his own sinews eat.
His own dear Una, hearing evermore
His rueful shrieks and groanings, often tore
Her guiltless garments and her golden hair,
For pity of his pain and anguish sore :
Yet all with patience wisely she did bear ;
For well she wist his crime could else be never
clear.¹

Whom, thus recover'd by wise Patience
And true Repentance, they to Una brought ;
Who, joyous of his cur'd conscience,
Him dearly kiss'd, and fairly eke besought
Himself to cherish, and consuming thought
To put away out of his careful breast.
By this² Charissa, late in childbed brought,
Was waxen strong, and left her fruitful nest :
To her fair Una brought this unacquainted guest.

She was a woman in her freshest age,
Of wondrous beauty, and of bounty rare,
With goodly grace and comely personage,
That was on earth not easy to compare ;
Full of great love ; but Cupid's wanton snare
As hell she hated ; chaste in work and will ;
Her neck and breasts were ever open bare,
That eye thereof her babes might suck their fill ;
The rest was all in yellow robes array'd still.

A multitude of babes about her hung,
Playing their sports, that joy'd her to behold ;
Whom still she fed, while they were weak and
young,

But thrust them forth still as they wax'd old :
And on her head she wore a tire³ of gold,
Adorn'd with gems and ouches⁴ wondrous fair,
Whose passing price uneth⁵ was to be told :⁶
And by her side there sat a gentle pair
Of turtle doves, she sitting in an ivory chair.

The Knight and Una, ent'ring, fair her greet,
And bid her joy of that her happy brood ;
Who them requites with court'sies seeming meet,
And entertains with friendly cheerful mood.
Then Una her besought, to be so good
As in her virtuous rules to school her Knight,
Now after all his torment well withstood
In that sad house of Penance, where his sprite
Had pass'd the pains of hell and long-enduring
night.

She was right joyous of her just request ;
And, taking by the hand that Faery's son,
Gan him instruct in every good behest,⁷
Of Love ; and Righteousness ; and Well to
don ;⁸

¹ Washed away, atoned.

² By this time ; meanwhile.

³ Head-dress, tiara.

⁴ Ornaments, buttons or bosses.

⁵ Scarcely.

⁶ Commandment.

⁷ Carefully.

⁸ Reckoned.

⁹ Well-doing.

¹⁰ Grievs.

And wrath and hatred warily⁹ to shun,
That drew on men God's hatred and his wrath,
And many souls in dolours¹⁰ had fordone :¹¹
In which when him she well instructed hath,
From thence to heav'n she teacheth him the
ready path.

Wherein his weaker wand'ring steps to guide,
An ancient matron she to her does call,
Whose sober looks her wisdom well descried ;¹²
Her name was Mercy ; well known over all¹³
To be both gracious and eke liberal :
To whom the careful charge of him she gave,
To lead aright, that he should never fall
In all his ways through this wide world's
wave ;¹⁴

That Mercy in the end his righteous soul might
save.

The godly matron by the hand him bears
Forth from her presence, by a narrow way,
Scatter'd with bushy thorns and ragged breres,¹⁵
Which still before him she remov'd away,
That nothing might his ready passage stay :
And ever when his feet encumber'd were,
Or gan to shrink, or from the right to stray,
She held him fast, and firmly did upbear ;
As careful nurse her child from falling oft does
rear.

Eftsoons unto a holy hospital,
That was foreby¹⁶ the way, she did him bring ;
In which seven beadmen,¹⁷ that had vow'd all
Their life to service of high heaven's King,
Did spend their days in doing godly thing :
Their gates to all were open evermore,
That by the weary way were travelling ;
And one sat waiting ever them before,
To call in comers-by, that needy were and poor.

The first of them, that eldest was and best,¹⁸
Of all the house had charge and government,
As guardian and steward of the rest :
His office was to give entertainment
And lodging unto all that came and went ;
Not unto such as could him feast again,
And double quite¹⁹ for that he on them spent ;
But such as want of harbour²⁰ did constrain :
Those for God's sake his duty was to entertain.

The second was as almoner of the place :
His office was the hungry for to feed,
And thirsty give to drink ; a work of grace.
He fear'd not once himself to be in need,
Nor car'd to hoard for those whom he did breed :
The grace of God he laid up still in store,
Which as a stock he left unto his seed :
He had enough ; what need him care for more ?
And had he less, yet some he would give to the
poor.

The third had of their wardrobe custody,
In which were not rich tires, nor garments gay,
The plumes of pride, and wings of vanity,

¹¹ Ruined.

¹² Everywhere.

¹³ Briars.

¹⁴ Near.

¹⁵ Men of prayer ; the virtue of Charity was divided
by the old theologians into seven heads or branches.

¹⁶ Highest in order of precedence.

¹⁷ Return a double recompense. ¹⁸ Refuge, shelter.

But clothes meet to keep keen cold away,
And naked nature seemly to array;
With which bare wretched wights¹ he daily clad,
The images of God in earthly clay;
And, if that no spare clothes to give he had,
His own coat he would cut, and it distribute glad.

The fourth appointed by his office was
Poor prisoners to relieve with gracious aid,
And captives to redeem with price of brass
From Turks and Saracens, which them had
stay'd;²

And though they faulty were, yet well he
weigh'd;³

That God to us forgiveth every hour
Much more than that why they in bands were laid;
And He, that harrow'd⁴ hell with heavy stowre,⁵
The faulty souls from thence brought to his
heav'nly bow'r.

The fifth had charge sick persons to attend,
And comfort those in point of death which lay;
For them most needeth comfort in the end,
When Sin, and Hell, and Death, do most dismay
The feeble soul departing hence away.

All is but lost, that living we bestow,
If not well ended at our dying day.

O man! have mind of that last bitter throe:
For as the tree does fall, so lies it ever low.

The sixth had charge of them now being dead,
In seemly sort their corsees to engrave,⁶
And deck with dainty flow'rs their bridal bed,
That to their heav'nly spouse both sweet and
brave

They might appear, when He their souls shall
save.

The wondrous workmanship of God's own
mould;⁷

Whose face He made all beasts to fear, and gave
All in his hand, ev'n dead we honour should.
Ah, dearest God, me grant I dead be not de-
foul'd!⁸

The sev'nth, now after death and burial done,
Had charge the tender orphans of the dead
And widows aid, lest they should be undone:
In face of judgment he their right would plead,
Nor aught the power of mighty men did dread
In their defence; nor would for gold or fee
Be won their rightful causes down to tread:
And, when they stood in most necessity,
He did supply their want, and gave them ever
free.⁹

There when the Elfin Knight arriv'd was,
The first and chiefest of the sev'n, whose care
Was guests to welcome, toward him did pass;
Where seeing Mercy, that his steps upbare
And always led, to her with reverence rare
He humbly louted¹⁰ in meek lowliness,
And seemly welcome did for her prepare:
For of their Order she was patroness,
All be¹¹ Chariass were their chiefest foundress.

¹ Mortals.

² Detained.

⁴ Ravaged. See note 11, page 51.

⁵ Assault.

⁷ Image.

⁸ Bounteously.

³ Considered.

⁶ Bury.

⁸ Outraged, insulted.

¹⁰ Bowed, made reverence.

Then she a while him stays, himself to rest,
That to the rest¹² more able he might be:
During which time in every good behest,¹³
And godly work of alms and charity,
She him instructed with great industry.
Shortly, therein so perfect he became,
That, from the first unto the last degree,
His mortal life he learn'd had to frame
In holy righteousness, without rebuke or blame.

Thence forward by that painful way they pass
Forth to a hill, that was both steep and high;
On top whereof a sacred chapel was,
And eke a little hermitage thereby,
Wherein an aged holy man did lie,
That day and night said his devotion,
Nor other worldly business did apply:¹⁴
His name was Heavenly Contemplation;
Of God and goodness was his meditation.

Great grace that old man to him given had;
For God he often saw from heaven's height:
All¹⁵ were his earthly eyne both blunt and bad,
And through great age had lost their kindly¹⁶
sight,

Yet wondrous quick and piercing was his sprite,¹⁷
As eagle's eye, that can behold the sun.
That hill they scale with all their pow'r and
might,

That his frail thighs, nigh weary and fordome,¹⁸
Gan fail; but, by her help, the top at last he won.

There they do find that godly aged sire,
With snowy locks adown his shoulders shed;
As hoary frost with spangles doth attire
The mossy branches of an oak half dead.
Each bone might through his body well be read,¹⁹
And every sinew seen, through his long fast:
For naught he car'd his carcase long unfed;
His mind was full of spiritual repast,
And pin'd his flesh to keep his body low and
chaste.

Who, when these two approaching he espied,
At their first presence grew aggrieved²⁰ sore,
That forc'd him lay his heav'nly thoughts aside;
And had he not that Dame respected more,
Whom highly he did reverence and adore,
He would not once have mov'd for the Knight.
They him saluted, standing far afore;
Who, well them greeting, humbly did requite,²¹
And ask'd, to what end they clomb that tedious
height.

"What end," quoth she, "should cause us take
such pain,

But that same end, which every living wight
Should make his mark,—high heaven to attain?
Is not from hence the way that leadeth right
To that most glorious house, that glist'neth bright
With burning stars and ever-living fire,
Whereof the keys are to thy hand behight²²
By wise Fidelia? She doth thee require
To show it to this Knight, according²³ his desire."

¹¹ Although.

¹² Commandment.

¹³ Although.

¹⁴ Spirit.

¹⁵ Perceived.

¹⁶ Respond.

¹⁷ The remainder of his task.

¹⁸ Attend to.

¹⁹ Natural.

²⁰ Exhausted.

²¹ Distressed, vexed.

²² Entrusted. ²³ Granting.

"Thrice happy man," said then the father grave,
"Whose staggering steps thy steady hand doth
lead,

And shows the way his sinful soul to save !
Who better can the way to heav'n aread¹
Than thou thyself, that wast both born and bred
In heav'nly throne, where thousand angels shine?
Thou dost the prayers of the righteous seed
Present before the Majesty Divine,
And His avenging wrath to clemency incline.

"Yet, since thou bid'st, thy pleasure shall be
done.

Then come, thou Man of Earth ! and see the way
That never yet was seen of Faery's son ;
That never leads the traveller astray,
But, after labours long and sad delay,
Brings them to joyous rest and endless bliss.
But first thou must a season fast and pray,
Till from her bands the sprite assoil'd² is,
And have her strength recur'd³ from frail in-
firmities."

That done, he leads him to the highest mount ;
Such one as that same mighty Man of God,⁴
That blood-red billows like a wall'd front
On either side disparted with his rod,
Till that his army dry-foot through them yode,⁵
Dwelt forty days upon ; where, writ in stone
With bloody letters by the hand of God,
The bitter doom of death and baleful mean
He did receive, while flashing fire about him
shone :

Or like that sacred hill,⁶ whose head full high,
Adorn'd with fruitful olives all around,
Is, as it were for endless memory
Of that dear Lord who oft thereon was found,
For ever with a flowering garland crown'd :
Or like that pleasant mount,⁷ that is for aye
Through famous poets' verse each where re-
nown'd,

On which the thrice three learned Ladies⁸ play
Their heav'nly notes, and make full many a
lovely lay.

From thence, far off he unto him did shew
A little path, that was both steep and long,
Which to a goodly city led his view ;
Whose walls and tow'rs were builded high and
strong

Of pearl and precious stone, that earthly tongue
Cannot describe, nor wit of man can tell ;
Too high a ditty⁹ for my simple song !
The City of the Great King hight it well,
Wherein eternal peace and happiness do dwell.

As he thereon stood gazing, he might see
The blessed angels to and fro descend
From highest heav'n in gladsome company,
And with great joy into that city wend,
As commonly¹⁰ as friend does with his friend.
Whereat he wonder'd much, and gan inquire
What stately building durst so high extend

Her lofty tow'rs unto the starry sphere,
And what unknown nation there empeopled
were.¹¹

"Fair Knight," quoth he, "Jerusalem that is,
The New Jerusalem, that God has built
For those to dwell in that are chosen his,
His chosen people purg'd from sinful guilt,
With precious blood, which cruelly was spilt
On cursed tree, of that unspotted Lamb,
That for the sins of all the world was kilt :¹²
Now are they saints all in that city sam',¹³
More dear unto their God than younglings to
their dam."

"Till now," said then the Knight, "I ween'd well
That great Cleopolis¹⁴ where I have been,
In which that fairest Faery Queen doth dwell,
The fairest city was that might be seen ;
And that bright tow'r, all built of crystal clean,¹⁵
Panthea, seem'd the brightest thing that was :
But now by proof all otherwise I ween ;
For this great city that does far surpass,
And this bright angels' tow'r quite dims that
tow'r of glass."

"Most true," then said the holy aged man ;
"Yet is Cleopolis, for earthly frame,
The fairest piece¹⁶ that eye beholden can ;
And well beseems all knights of noble name,
That covet in th' immortal book of fame
To be eternis'd, that same to haunt,
And do their service to that sov'reign Dame
That glory does to them for guerdon¹⁷ grant :
For she is heav'nly born, and heav'n may justly
vaunt.

"And thou, fair imp,¹⁸ sprung out from English
race,
However now accounted Elfin's son,
Well worthy dost thy service for her grace,
To aid a virgin desolate, fordome.¹⁹
But when thou famous victory hast won,
And high amongst all knights hast hung thy
shield,
Thenceforth the suit²⁰ of earthly conquest shun,
And wash thy hands from guilt of bloody field :
For blood can naught but sin, and wars but
sorrows, yield.

"Then seek this path that I to thee presage,²¹
Which after all to heaven shall thee send ;
Then peaceably thy painful pilgrimage
To yonder same Jerusalem do bend,
Where is for thee ordain'd a blessed end :
For thou amongst those saints, whom thou dost
see,
Shalt be a saint, and thine own nation's friend.
And patron : Thou *Saint George* shalt call'd be,
Saint George of merry England, the sign of
victory."

"Unworthy wretch," quoth he, "of so great
grace,

¹ Declare. ² Absolved, set free. ³ Recovered.
⁴ Moses, who commanded the Red Sea to divide for
the passage of the Israelite host.
⁵ Went ; past tense of "yede" or "yead," go.
⁶ The Mount of Olivet. ⁷ Parnassus.
⁸ The Nine Muses. ⁹ Theme.

¹⁰ Familiarly.

¹¹ Killed.

¹² "The City of Glory."

¹³ Structure.

¹⁴ Youth.

¹⁵ Pursuit.

¹⁶ Dwelt there.

¹⁷ Same.

¹⁸ Pure.

¹⁹ Reward.

²⁰ Overwhelmed with calamity.

²¹ Point out.

How dare I think such glory to attain !
 " These, that have it attain'd, were in like case,"
 Quoth he, " as wretched, and liv'd in like
 pain."¹

" But deeds of arms must I at last be fain,²
 And ladies' love, to leave, so dearly bought ?"
 " What need of arms, where peace doth aye
 remain,"

Said he, " and battles none are to be fought ?
 As for loose loves, they 're vain, and vanish into
 naught."

" O let me not," quoth he, " then turn again
 Back to the world, whose joys so fruitless are ;
 But let me here for ay in peace remain,
 Or straightway on that last long voyage fare,
 That nothing may my present hope impair."³

" That may not be," said he, " nor may'st thou
 yet

Forego that royal Maid's bequeath'd care,
 Who did her cause into thy hand commit,
 Till from her curs'd foe thou have her freely
 quit."⁴

" Then shall I soon," quoth he, " so God me
 grace,"⁵

Abet⁶ that Virgin's cause disconsolate,
 And shortly back return unto this place,
 To walk this way in pilgrim's poor estate.
 But now ahead,⁷ old Father, why of late
 Didst thou behight⁸ me born of English blood,
 Whom all a Faery's son do nominate ?"⁹

" That word shall I," said he, " avouchen good,⁹
 Since to thee is unknown the cradle of thy brood.

" For well I wot thou spring'st from ancient race
 Of Saxon kings, that have with mighty hand,
 And many bloody battles fought in place,
 High rear'd their royal throne in Britons' land,
 And vanquish'd them, unable to withstand :
 From thence a Faery thee unweeting¹⁰ reft,
 There as thou slept in tender swaddling band,
 And her base Elfin brood there for thee left :
 Such men do changelings call, so chang'd by
 Faery's theft.

" Thence she thee brought into this Faery Land,
 And in a heap'd furrow did thee hide ;
 Where thee a ploughman all unweeting fand,
 As he his toilsome team that way did guide,
 And brought thee up in ploughman's state to
 bide,

Whereof Gëorgos¹¹ he thee gave to name ;
 Till, prick'd with courage and thy force's pride,
 To Faery Court thou cam'st to seek for fame,
 And prove thy puissant arms, as seems thee best
 became."

" O holy Sire," quoth he, " how shall I quite¹²
 The many favours I with thee have found,
 That hast my name and nation read¹³ aright,
 And taught the way that does to heaven
 bound !"¹⁴

This said, adown he look'd to the ground,

¹ Rev. vii. 14: "These are they which came out of
 great tribulation."

² Diminish.

³ Favour.

⁴ Explain.

⁵ Vindicate as true.

⁶ Constrained.

⁷ Delivered.

⁸ Assist.

⁹ Call.

¹⁰ Unconscious.

To have return'd ;¹⁵ but daz'd¹⁶ were his eyne
 Through passing brightness, which did quite
 confound

His feeble sense, and too exceeding shine.
 So dark are earthly things compar'd to things
 divine !

At last, when as himself he gan to find,
 To Una back he cast him¹⁷ to retire ;
 Who him awaited still with pensive mind.
 Great thanks, and goodly meed, to that good sire
 He thence departing gave for his pain's hire.¹⁸
 So came to Una, who him joy'd to see ;
 And, after little rest, gan him desire
 Of her adventure mindful for to be.
 So leave they take of Cælia and her daughters
 three.

CANTO XI.

The Knight with that old Dragon fights

Two days incessantly :

The third, him overthrows : and gains

Most glorious victory.

HIGH time now gan it wax¹⁹ for Una fair
 To think of those her captive parents dear,
 And their forwasted kingdom to repair :
 Whereto when as they now approach'd near,
 With hearty words her Knight she gan to cheer,
 And in her modest manner thus bespake ;
 " Dear Knight, as dear as ever knight was dear,
 That all these sorrows suffer for my sake,
 High heav'n behold the tedious toil ye for me
 take !

" Now are we come unto my native soil,
 And to the place where all our perils dwell ;
 Here haunts that fiend, and does his daily spoil ;
 Therefore henceforth be at your keeping²⁰ well,
 And ever ready for your foeman fell :
 The spark of noble courage now awake,
 And strive your excellent self to excel :
 That shall ye evermore renown'd make
 Above all knights on earth that battle under-
 take."

And pointing forth, " Lo ! yonder is," said she,
 " The brazen tow'r in which my parents dear
 For dread of that huge fiend imprison'd be ;
 Whom I from far see on the walls appear,
 Whose sight my feeble soul doth greatly cheer :
 And on the top of all I do espy
 The watchman waiting tidings glad to hear ;
 That, O my parents, might I happily
 Unto you bring, to ease you of your misery !"
 With that they heard a roaring hideous sound,
 That all the air with terror fill'd wide,
 And seem'd unceath²¹ to shake the steadfast
 ground.

Eftsoons that dreadful dragon they espied,

¹¹ Γεωργος, Greek for a husbandman.

¹² Repay.

¹³ Ascend.

¹⁴ Dazzled.

¹⁵ To reward his trouble.

¹⁶ On your guard.

¹⁷ Declared.

¹⁸ With the purpose of returning.

¹⁹ Resolved.

²⁰ It became.

²¹ Underneath.

Where stretch'd he lay upon the sunny side
Of a great hill, himself like a great hill :
But, all so soon as he from far descried
Those glist'ring arms that heav'n with light did
fill,
He rous'd himself full blithe, and hastened
them until.¹

Then bade the Knight his Lady yede² aloof,
And to a hill herself withdraw aside ;
From whence she might behold that battle's
proof,
And eke be safe from danger far descried :
She him obey'd, and turn'd a little wide.—
Now, O thou sacred Muse, most learn'd Dame,
Fair imp³ of Phoebus and his aged bride,⁴
The nurse of Time and everlasting Fame,
That warlike hands ennoblest with immortal
name ;

O gently come into my feeble breast ;
Come gently ; but not with that mighty rage
Wherewith the martial troops thou dost infest,
And hearts of great heróes dost enrage,
That naught their kindled courage may assuage :
Soon as thy dreadful trump begins to sound,
The god of war with his fierce equipage
Thou dost awake, sleep never he so sound ;
And scar'd nations dost with horror stern
astound.

Fair Goddess, lay that furious fit aside,
Till I of wars and bloody Mars do sing,⁵
And Briton fields with Saracen blood bedy'd,
'Twixt that great Faery Queen and Paynim king,
That with their horror heav'n and earth did ring ;
A work of labour long, and endless praise :
But now awhile let down that haughty string,
And to my tunes thy second tenor raise,
That I this man of God his godly arms may blaze.⁶

By this the dreadful beast drew nigh to hand,
Half flying and half footing in his haste,
That with his largeness measur'd much land,
And made wide shadow under his huge waist,
As mountain doth the valley overcast.
Approaching nigh, he rear'd high afore
His body monstrous, horrible, and vast ;
Which, to increase his wondrous greatness more,
Was swoll'n with wrath and poison, and with
bloody gore ;

And over all with brazen scales was arm'd,
Like plated coat of steel, so couch'd near⁷
That naught might pierce ; nor might his corse
be harm'd

With dint of sword, nor push of pointed spear :
Which, as an eagle, seeing prey appear,
His airy plumes doth rouse full rudely dight ;⁸
So shak'd he, that horror was to hear :

¹ Towards.² Go.³ Offspring.

⁴ Mnemosyne, or Memory ; who, in most of the traditions about the genealogy of the Muses, is said to have been their mother. Most commonly, however, their paternity is ascribed to Zeus. The tuneful Nine were often called the "Mnemonides." The invocation of the poet is addressed to Clio, the historic Muse, to whom he had appealed at the outset of his work.

⁵ Spenser is understood here to refer to his purpose

For, as the clashing of an armour bright,
Such noise his rous'd scales did send unto the
Knight.

His flaggy⁹ wings, when forth he did display,
Were like two sails, in which the hollow wind
Is gather'd full, and worketh speedy way :
And eke the pens,¹⁰ that did his pinions bind,
Were like main-yards with flying canvas lin'd ;
With which when as him list the air to beat,
And there by force unwonted passage find,
The clouds before him fled for terror great,
And all the heav'ns stood still, amaz'd with his
threat.

His huge long tail, wound up in hundred folds,
Does overspread his long brass-scaly¹¹ back,
Whose wreath'd boughts¹² whenever he unfolds,
And thick-entangled knots adown does slack,
Bespotted as with shields of red and black,
It sweepeth all the land behind him far,
And of three furlongs does but little lack ;
And at the point two stings infix'd are,
Both deadly sharp, that sharpest steel exceeden
far.

But stings and sharpest steel did far exceed
The sharpness of his cruel rending claws :
Dead was it sure, as sure as death indeed,
Whatever thing does touch his ravenous paws,
Or what within his reach he ever draws.
But his most hideous head my tongue to tell
Does tremble ; for his deep devouring jaws
Wide gap'd, like the grisly mouth of hell,
Through which into his dark abyas all ravin¹³ fell.

And, what more wondrous was, in either jaw
Three ranks of iron teeth enrang'd were,
In which yet trickling blood, and gobbets raw,
Of late-devour'd bodies did appear ;
That sight thereof bred cold congeal'd fear :
Which to increase, and all at once to kill,
A cloud of smoth'ring smoke and sulphur sear¹⁴
Out of his stinking gorge¹⁵ forth steam'd still,
That all the air about with smoke and stench
did fill.

His blazing eyes, like two bright shining shields,
Did burn with wrath, and sparkled living fire :
As two broad beacons, set in open fields,
Send forth their flames far off to every shire,
And warning give, that enemies conspire
With fire and sword the region to invade ;
So flam'd his eyne with rage and rancorous ire :
But far within, as in a hollow glade,
Those glaring lamps were set, that made a
dreadful shade.

So dreadfully he toward him did pass,
Forelifting up aloft his speckled breast,
And often bounding on the bruised grass,

of singing, under the guise of the allegory described just below, the war between Queen Elizabeth and Spain, in the later books of the "Faerie Queen."

⁶ Celebrate.⁷ Laid so close together.⁸ Doth stir her ruffled or roughly-trimmed feathers.⁹ Floating.¹⁰ Feathers.¹¹ Covered with brazen scales.¹² Folds, coils.¹³ Prey.¹⁴ Burning.¹⁵ Throat.

As for great joyance of his new-come guest.
 Eftsoons he gan advance his haughty crest,
 As chafed boar his bristles doth uprear;
 And shook his scales to battle ready drest.¹
 (That made the Redcrosse Knight nigh quake for
 fear),
 As bidding bold defiance to his foeman near.

The Knight gan fairly couch his steady spear,
 And fiercely ran at him with rigorous might:
 The pointed steel, arriving rudely there,
 His harder hide would neither pierce nor bite,
 But, glancing by, forth passed forward right:
 Yet, sore moved with so puissant push,
 The wrathful beast about him turned light,
 And him so rudely, passing by, did brush
 With his long tail, that horse and man to ground
 did rush.

Both horse and man up lightly rose again,
 And fresh encounter toward him addrest:
 But th' idle stroke yet back recoil'd in vain,
 And found no place his deadly point to rest.
 Exceeding rage inflam'd the furious beast,
 To be avenged of so great despite;
 For never felt his impierceable breast
 So wondrous force from hand of living wight;
 Yet had he prov'd the power of many a puissant
 knight.

Then, with his waving wings displayed wide,
 Himself up high he lifted from the ground,
 And with strong flight did forcibly divide
 The yielding air, which nigh too feeble found
 Her fitting parts, and element unsound,
 To bear so great a weight: he, cutting way
 With his broad sails, about him soared round;
 At last, low stooping with unwieldy sway,
 Snatch'd up both horse and man, to bear them
 quite away.

Long he them bore above the subject plain,²
 So far as yewen bow a shaft may send;
 Till struggling strong did him at last constrain
 To let them down before his flight's end:
 As haggard³ hawk, presuming to contend
 With hardy fowl above his able might,⁴
 His weary pounces⁵ all in vain doth spend
 To truss⁶ the prey too heavy for his flight;
 Which, coming down to ground, does free itself
 by fight.

He so disseiz'd⁷ of his griping gross,⁸
 The Knight his thrillant⁹ spear again assay'd
 In his brass-plated body to emboss,¹⁰
 And three men's strength unto the stroke he
 laid;
 Wherewith the stiff beam quaked, as afraid,
 And glancing from his scaly neck did glide
 Close under his left wing, then broad display'd:

¹ Prepared. ² The plain beneath.
³ Untrained or refractory — which flew at unper-
mitted game, and would not obey the falconer's recall.
⁴ More than his strength can match.
⁵ Talons. ⁶ Gather up.
⁷ Dispossessed.
⁸ The bulky prey which he had grasped.
⁹ Piercing; akin to the word "drill," in the same
signification of boring or piercing; from the Anglo-

The piercing steel there wrought a wound full
 wide,
 That with the uncouth¹¹ smart the monster
 loudly cried.

He cried, as raging seas are wont to roar,
 When wintry storm his wrathful wreck does
 threat;

The rolling billows beat the ragged shore,
 As they the earth would shoulder from her seat;
 And greedy gulf does gape, as he would eat
 His neighbour element in his revenge:
 Then gin the blust'ring brethren boldly threat
 To move the world from off his steadfast henge,¹²
 And boist'rous battle make, each other to avenge.

The steely head stuck fast still in his flesh,
 Till with his cruel claws he snatch'd the wood,
 And quite asunder broke: forth flowed fresh
 A gushing river of black gory blood,
 That drown'd all the land whereon he stood;
 The stream thereof would drive a water-mill:
 Trebly augmented was his furious mood
 With bitter sense of his deep-rooted ill,¹³
 That flames of fire he threw forth from his large
 nostrill.¹⁴

His hideous tail then hurl'd he about,
 And therewith all enwrapt the nimble thighs
 Of his froth-foamy steed, whose courage stout,
 Striving to loose the knot that fast him ties,
 Himself in straiter bands too rash implies,¹⁵
 That to the ground he is perforce constrain'd
 To throw his rider: who gan quickly rise
 From off the earth, with dirty blood distain'd,
 For that reproachful fall right foully he dis-
 dain'd;

And fiercely took his trenchant blade in hand,
 With which he struck so furious and so fell,
 That nothing seem'd the puissance could with-
 stand:

Upon his crest the harden'd iron fell;
 But his more harden'd crest was arm'd so well,
 That deeper dint therein it would not make;
 Yet so extremely did the buff¹⁶ him quell,
 That from thenceforth he shunn'd the like to
 take,
 But, when he saw them come, he did them still
 forsake.¹⁷

The Knight was wroth to see his stroke beguil'd,
 And smote again with more outrageous might;
 But back again the sparkling steel recoil'd,
 And left not any mark where it did light,
 As if in adamant rock it had been pight.¹⁸
 The beast, impatient of his smarting wound,
 And of so fierce and forcible despite,
 Thought with his wings to sty¹⁹ above the
 ground;
 But his late-wounded wing unserviceable found.

Saxon, "thirlian." See note 11, page 23; and the
closing line of next stanza but one.

¹⁰ Lodge. ¹¹ Unwonted.
¹² Hinge. ¹³ Hurt, wound.
¹⁴ Nostril; Chaucer used "nose-thirle," for the deri-
vation of which see note 9.
¹⁵ Enfold. ¹⁶ Buffet, blow.
¹⁷ Avoid. ¹⁸ Struck, fixed.
¹⁹ Mount; German, "steigen," to ascend.

Then, full of grief and anguish vehement,
He loudly bray'd, that like was never heard ;
And from his wide devouring oven sent
A flake of fire, that, flashing in his¹ beard,
Him all amaz'd, and almost made afear'd :
The scorching flame sore sing'd all his face,
And through his armour all his body sear'd,²
That he could not endure so cruel case,
But thought his arms to leave,³ and helmet to
unlace.

Not that great champion of the antique world,⁴
Whom famous poets' verse so much doth vaunt,
And hath for twelve huge labours high extoll'd,
So many furies and sharp fits did haunt,
When him the poison'd garment did enchant,
With Centaur's blood and bloody verses
charm'd ;
As did this Knight twelve thousand dolours
daunt,
Whom fiery steel now burn'd, that erst him
arm'd ;
That erst him goodly arm'd, now most of all
him harm'd.

Faint, weary, sore, emboil'd,⁵ griev'd, brent,⁶
With heat, toil, wounds, arms, smart, and in-
ward fire,
That never man such mischiefs did torment ;
Death better were ; death did he oft desire ;
But death will never come, when needs require.
Whom so dismay'd when that his foe beheld,
He cast⁷ to suffer him no more respire,⁸
But gan his sturdy stern⁹ about to weld,¹⁰
And him so strongly struck, that to the ground
him fell'd.

It fortun'd (as fair it then befell),
Behind his back, unweeting¹¹ where he stood,
Of ancient time there was a springing well,
From which fast trickled forth a silver flood,
Full of great virtues, and for med'cine good :
Whilom, before that cursed dragon got
That happy land, and all with innocent blood
Defil'd those sacred waves, it rightly hot¹²
The Well of Life ; nor yet his virtues had forgot :
For unto life the dead it could restore,
And guilt of sinful crimes clean wash away ;
Those that with sickness were infected sore
It could recure ;¹³ and aged long decay
Renew, as one were born that very day.
Both Silo¹⁴ this, and Jordan did excel,
And th' English Bath, and eke the German Spa ;
Nor can Cephise, nor Hebrus,¹⁵ match this Well :
Into the same the Knight back overthrown
fell.

Now gan the golden Phoebus for to steep
His fiery face in billows of the west,
And his faint steeds water'd in ocean deep,

While from their journal¹⁶ labours they did
rest ;

When that infernal monster, having kest¹⁷
His weary foe into that living well,
Gan high advance his broad discolour'd breast
Above his wonted pitch, with count'nance fell,
And clapt his iron wings, as victor he did dwell.
Which when his pensive Lady saw from far,
Great woe and sorrow did her soul assay,¹⁸
As weening that the sad end of the war ;
And gan to Highest God entirely¹⁹ pray
That fear'd chance from her to turn away :
With folded hands, and knees full lowly bent,
All night she watch'd ; nor once adown would lay
Her dainty limbs in her sad dreariment,²⁰
But praying still did wake, and waking did
lament.

The morrow next gan early to appear,
That Titan rose to run his daily race ;
But early, ere the morrow next gan rear
Out of the sea fair Titan's dewy face,
Uprose the gentle Virgin from her place,
And look'd all about, if she might spy
Her lov'd Knight to move his manly pace :
For she had great doubt of his safety,
Since late she saw him fall before his enemy.

At last she saw where he upstart'd brave
Out of the well wherein he drench'd lay :
As eagle fresh out of the ocean wave,
Where he hath left his plumes all hoary gray,
And deck'd himself with feathers youthly gay,
Like eyas²¹ hawk upmounts unto the skies,
His newly-budded pinions to assay,²²
And marvels at himself, still as he flies :
So new this new-born Knight to battle new did
rise.

Whom when the damn'd fiend so fresh did spy,
No wonder if he wonder'd at the sight,
And doubted whether his late enemy
It were, or other new suppli'd knight.
He now, to prove his late-renew'd might,
High brandishing his bright dew-burning²³ blade,
Upon his crested scalp so sore did smite,
That to the skull a yawning wound it made :
The deadly dint his dull'd senses all dismay'd.

I wot not whether the revenging steel
Were harden'd with that holy water dew
Wherein he fell ; or sharper edge did feel ;
Or his baptiz'd hands now greater grew ;
Or other secret virtue did ensue ;
Else never could the force of fleshly arm,
Nor molten metal, in his blood embrue ;²⁴
For, till that stound,²⁵ could never wight him
harm

By subtilty, nor sleight, nor might, nor mighty
charm.

1 The Knight's.

2 Burned.

3 Cast off.

4 Hercules.

5 Boiled, intensely heated.

6 Resolved.

8 Tail.

7 Breathe.

9 Wield, swing.

10 Without his knowledge.

11 Was called.

12 Recover.

13 The Pool of Siloam, to which Christ sent the man born blind to wash his eyes and regain his sight (John ix. 7).

14 Cephissus and Hebrus were famous rivers, the one in Boeotia, the other in Thrace.

15 Diurnal, daily ; French, "journal."

16 Cast.

17 Beset, assail.

18 Earnestly, sincerely.

19 Distress, terror.

20 Newly-fledged ; lately out of the "ey," or egg.

21 Try.

22 Dip itself in his (the dragon's) blood.

23 Moment.

The cruel wound enrag'd him so sore,
That loud he yell'd for exceeding pain ;
As hundred ramping lions seem'd to roar,
Whom ravenous hunger did thereto constrain.
Then gan he toss aloft his stretch'd train,¹
And therewith scourge the buxom² air so sore,
That to his force to yelden it was fain ;
Nor aught his sturdy strokes might stand afore,
That high trees overthrew, and rocks in pieces
tore :

The same advancing high above his head,
With sharp intended³ sting so rude him smote,
That to the earth him drove, as stricken dead ;
Nor living wight would have him life behot :⁴
The mortal sting his angry needle shot
Quite through his shield, and in his shoulder
seas'd,⁵

Where fast it stuck, nor would thereout be got :
The grief thereof him wondrous sore diseas'd,
Nor might his rankling pain with patience be
appeas'd.

But yet, more mindful of his honour dear
Than of the grievous smart which him did wring,
From loath'd soil he gan him lightly rear,
And strove to loose the far-infix'd sting :
Which when in vain he tried with struggeling,
Inflam'd with wrath, his raging blade he heft,⁶
And struck so strongly, that the knotty string
Of his huge tail he quite asunder cleft ;
Five joints thereof he hew'd, and but the stump
him left.

Heart cannot think what outrage and what cries,
With foul enfoulder'd⁷ smoke and flashing fire,
The hell-bred beast threw forth unto the skies,
That all was cover'd with darkness dire :
Then fraught with rancour, and engorg'd⁸ ire,
He cast⁹ at once him to avenge for all ;
And, gath'ring up himself out of the mire
With his uneven wings, did fiercely fall
Upon his sun-bright shield, and gript it fast
withal.

Much was the man encumber'd with his hold,
In fear to lose his weapon in his paw,
Nor wist yet how his talons to unfold ;
Nor harder was from Cerberus' greedy jaw
To pluck a bone, than from his cruel claw
To reave¹⁰ by strength the grip'd gage¹¹ away :
Thrice he essay'd it from his foot to draw,
And thrice in vain to draw it did essay ;
It boot'd¹² naught to think to rob him of his
prey.

Then, when he saw no power might prevail,
His trusty sword he call'd to his last aid,
Wherewith he fiercely did his foe assail,
And double blows about him stoutly laid,
That glancing fire out of the iron play'd ;
As sparkles from the anvil use to fly,
When heavy hammers on the wedge are sway'd ;

Therewith at last he forc'd him to untie
One of his grasping feet, him to defend thereby.
The other foot, fast fix'd on his shield,
When as no strength nor strokes might him
constrain
To loose, nor yet the warlike pledge to yield,
He smote thereat with all his might and main,
That naught so wondrous puissance might sus-
tain :

Upon the joint the lucky steel did light,
And made such way, that hew'd it quite in
twain ;
The paw yet miss'd not his minish'd might,
But hung still on the shield, as it at first was
pight.¹³

For grief thereof, and devilish despite,¹⁴
From his infernal furnace forth he threw
Huge flames, that dimm'd all the heaven's light,
Enroll'd in dusky smoke and brimstone blue :
As burning Etna from his boiling stew
Doth belch out flames, and rocks in pieces broke,
And ragged ribs of mountains molten new,
Enwrapt in coal-black clouds and filthy smoke,
That all the land with stench, and heav'n with
horror, choke.

The heat whereof, and harmful pestilence,
So sore him noy'd,¹⁵ that forc'd him to retire
A little backward for his best defence,
To save his body from the scorching fire,
Which he from hellish entrails did expire.¹⁶
It chanc'd (Eternal God that chance did guide),
As he recoiled backward, in the mire
His nigh forweari'd feeble feet did slide,
And down he fell, with dread of shame sore
terrified.

There grew a goodly tree him fair beside,
Loaden with fruit and apples rosy red,
As they in pure vermilion had been dy'd,
Whereof great virtues over all were read :¹⁷
For happy life to all which thereon fed,
And life eke everlasting, did befall :
Great God it planted in that blessed stead¹⁸
With his Almighty hand, and did it call
The Tree of Life, the crime¹⁹ of our first father's
fall.

In all the world like was not to be found,
Save in that soil, where all good things did grow,
And freely sprung out of the fruitful ground,
As incorrupted Nature did them sow,
Till that dread dragon all did overthrow.
Another like fair tree eke grew thereby,
Whereof whoso did eat, oftsoons did know
Both good and ill : O mournful memory !
That tree through one man's fault hath done²⁰ us
all to die !

From that first tree forth flow'd, as from a well,
A trickling stream of balm, most sovereign
And dainty dear,²¹ which on the ground still fell,

¹ Outstretched tail.

² Yielding. See note 24, page 94.

³ Stretched out.

⁴ Promised, assured of.

⁵ Stayed, seated itself.

⁶ Heaved, uplifted.

⁷ Mixed with lightning ; from French "foudroyer,"
"foudre."

⁸ Swallowed, suppressed.

⁹ Resolved, strove.

¹⁰ Wrench.

¹¹ Object of combat.

¹² Fastened.

¹³ Annoyed.

¹⁴ Everywhere were reported.

¹⁵ Cause ; that is, the Tree was the occasion of the sin
which led to the Fall.

¹⁶ Precious.

¹⁷ Availed.

¹⁸ Fury.

¹⁹ Breathe out.

²⁰ Place.

²¹ Caused.

And overflow'd all the fertile plain,
As it had dew'd been with timely rain :
Life and long health that gracious ointment gave ;
And deadly wounds could heal ; and rear again
The senseless corse appointed for the grave :
Into that same he fell, which did from death
him save.

For nigh thereto the ever-damn'd beast
Durst not approach, for he was deadly made,¹
And all that life preserv'd did detest ;
Yet he it oft adventur'd to invade.
By this the drooping Daylight gan to fade,
And yield his room to sad succeeding Night,
Who with her sable mantle gan to shade
The face of earth and ways of living wight,
And high her burning torch set up in heaven
bright.

When gentle Una saw the second fall
Of her dear Knight, who, weary of long fight,
And faint through loss of blood, mov'd not at all,
But lay, as in a dream of deep delight,
Besmear'd with precious balm, whose virtuous
might

Did heal his wounds, and scorching heat allay ;
Again she stricken was with sore affright,
And for his safety gan devoutly pray,
And watch the noyous² night, and wait for
joyous day.

The joyous day gan early to appear ;
And fair Aurora from the dewy bed
Of aged Tithone gan herself to rear
With rosy cheeks, for shame as blushing red :
Her golden locks, for haste, were loosely shed
About her ears, when Una her did mark
Climb to her chariot, all with flowers spread,
From heaven high to chase the cheerless Dark ;
With merry note her loud salutes the mounting
lark.

Then freshly up arose the doughty Knight,
All heal'd of his hurts and wound's wide,
And did himself to battle ready dight ;³
Whose early foe awaiting him beside
To have devour'd, so soon as day he spied,
When now he saw himself so freshly rear,
As if late fight had naught him damnified,⁴
He wax⁵ dismay'd, and gan his fate to fear ;
Nathless with wonted rage he him advanc'd near ;

And in his first encounter, gaping wide,
He thought at once him to have swallow'd quite,
And rush'd upon him with outrageous pride ;
Who him rencount'ring fierce, as hawk in flight,
Perforce rebutted back :⁶ the weapon bright,
Taking advantage of his open jaw,
Ran through his mouth with so importune⁷
might,
That deep empiers'd his darksome hollow maw,⁸
And, back retir'd, his life-blood forth withal
did draw.

So down he fell, and forth his life did breathe,
That vanish'd into smoke and cloud's swift ;

¹ Of a deadly nature.

² Boleful.

⁴ Injured.

⁶ Repelled.

⁸ Belly.

³ Prepare.

⁵ Became, waxed.

⁷ Urgent, persistent.

⁹ Cliff.

So down he fell, that th' earth him underneath
Did groan, as feeble so great load to lift ;
So down he fell, as a huge rocky cliff,⁹
Whose false¹⁰ foundation waves have wash'd
away,

With dreadful poise¹¹ is from the mainland rift,
And, rolling down, great Neptune doth dismay :
So down he fell, and like a heap'd mountain lay.

The Knight himself ev'n trembled at his fall,
So huge and horrible a mass it seem'd ;
And his dear lady, that beheld it all,
Durst not approach for dread which she mis-
deem'd ;¹²

But yet at last, when as the direful fiend
She saw not stir, off-shaking vain affright
She nigher drew, and saw that joyous end :
Then God she prais'd, and thank'd her faithful
Knight,
That had achiev'd so great a conquest by his
might.

CANTO XII.

*Fair Una to the Redcross Knight
Betroth'd is with joy :
Though false Duessa, it to bar,
Her false sleights do employ.*

BEHOLD I see the haven nigh at hand,
To which I mean my weary course to bend ;
Veer the main sheet,¹³ and bear up with the land,
The which afore¹⁴ is fairly to be kenn'd,¹⁵
And seemeth safe from storms that may offend :
There this fair Virgin, weary of her way,
Must landed be, now at her journey's end :
There eke my feeble bark a while may stay,
Till merry wind and weather call her thence
away.

Scarcely had Phoebus in the glooming east
Yet harness'd his fiery-footed team,
Nor rear'd above the earth his flaming crest ;
When the last deadly smoke aloft did steam,
That sign of last outbreath'd life did seem
Unto the watchman on the castle-wall,
Who thereby dead that baleful beast did deem,
And to his lord and lady loud gan call,
To tell how he had seen the dragon's fatal fall.

Uprose with hasty joy, and feeble speed,
That aged sire, the lord of all that land,
And look'd forth, to weet¹⁶ if true indeed
Those tidings were as he did understand :
Which when as true by trial he out fand,¹⁷
He bade to open wide his brazen gate,
Which long time had been shut, and out of
hand¹⁸

Proclaim'd joy and peace through all his state ;
For dead now was their foe, which them fo-
ray'd¹⁹ late.

¹⁰ Treacherous.

¹¹ Force, weight.

¹² Groundlessly conceived.

¹³ Wear or turn the mainsail.

¹⁴ Discerned.

¹⁵ Found.

¹⁶ Before us.

¹⁷ Learn.

¹⁸ Immediately.

¹⁹ Ravaged.

Then gan triumphant trumpets sound on high,
That sent to heav'n the echo'd report
Of their new joy, and happy victory
'Gainst him that had them long oppress'd with
tort,¹

And fast imprison'd in sieg'd fort.
Then all the people, as in solemn feast,
To him assembled with one full consórt,²
Rejoicing at the fall of that great beast,
From whose eternal bondage now they were
releas't.

Forth came that ancient lord and aged queen,
Array'd in ántique robes down to the ground,
And sad³ habiliments right well beseen :⁴
A noble crew⁵ about them waited round,
Of sage and sober peers, all gravely gown'd ;
Whom far before did march a goodly band
Of tall young men, all able arms to sound,⁶
But now they laurel branches bore in hand ;
Glad sign of victory and peace in all their land.

Unto that doughty conqueror they came,
And, him before themselves prostrating low,
Their lord and patron loud did him proclaim,
And at his feet their laurel boughs did throw.
Soon after them, all dancing on a row,
The comely virgins came, with garlands dight,⁷
As fresh as flow'rs in meadow green do grow,
When morning dew upon their leaves doth
light ;
And in their hands sweet timbrels all upheld on
height.⁸

And, them before, the fry⁹ of children young
Their wanton sports and childish mirth did play,
And to the maidens' sounding timbrels sung
In well attun'd notes a joyous lay,
And made delightful music all the way,
Until they came where that fair Virgin stood :
As fair Diana in fresh summer's day
Beholds her nymphs enrang'd in shady wood,
Some wrestle, some do run, some bathe in crystal
flood ;

So she beheld those maidens' merriment
With cheerful view ; who, when to her they
came,
Themselves to ground with gracious humbles¹⁰
bent,
And her ador'd by honourable name,
Lifting to heav'n her everlasting fame :
Then on her head they set a garland green,
And crown'd her 'twixt earnest and 'twixt
game :
Who, in her self-resemblance well beseen,
Did seem, such as she was, a goodly Maiden
Queen.

And after all the rascal many¹¹ ran,
Heap'd together in rude rabblement,
To see the face of that victorious man,
Whom all admir'd as from heaven sent,

¹ Wrong ; French, " tort."

² In one great concourse.

³ Grave.

⁴ Rich and appropriate to their state.

⁵ Crowd, suite.

⁶ To make use of, cause to resound in fray.

⁷ Decked.

⁸ Aloft.

⁹ Swarm, crowd.

¹⁰ Humility.

And gas'd upon with gaping wonderment.
But when they came where that dead dragon
lay,
Stretch'd on the ground in monstrous large
extent,
The sight with idle fear did them dismay,
Nor durst approach him nigh, to touch, or once
assay.¹²

Some fear'd, and fled ; some fear'd, and well it
feign'd ;¹³

One, that would wiser seem than all the rest,
Warn'd him not touch, for yet perhaps remain'd
Some ling'ring life within his hollow breast,
Or in his womb might lurk some hidden nest
Of many dragonets,¹⁴ his fruitful seed ;
Another said, that in his eyes did rest
Yet sparkling fire, and bade thereof take heed ;
Another said, he saw him move his eyes indeed.

One mother, when as her foolhardy child
Did come too near, and with his talons play,
Half dead through fear, her little babe revil'd,
And to her gossips gan in counsel say ;
" How can I tell, but that his talons may
Yet scratch my son, or rend his tender hand ? "¹⁵
So diversely themselves in vain they fray ;¹⁶
While some, more bold, to measure him nigh
stand,

To prove how many acres he did spread of land.

Thus flock'd all the folk him round about ;
The while that hoary king, with all his train,
Being arriv'd where that champion stout
After his foe's defeasance¹⁷ did remain,
Him goodly greets, and fair does entertain
With princely gifts of ivory and gold,
And thousand thanks him yields for all his pain.¹⁸
Then, when his daughter dear he does behold,
Her dearly doth embrace, and kisseth manifold.

And after to his palace he them brings,
With shawms, and trumpets, and with clarions
sweet ;

And all the way the joyous people sings,
And with their garments strows the pav'd street ;
Whence mounting up, they find purveyance¹⁹
meet

Of all that royal prince's court became ;
And all the floor was underneath their feet
Bespread with costly scarlet of great name,²⁰
On which they lowly sit, and fitting purpose²¹
frame.

What needs me tell their feast and goodly guise,²²
In which was nothing riotous nor vain ?
What needs of dainty dishes to devise,
Of comely services, or courtly train ?
My narrow leaves cannot in them contain
The large discourse of royal princes' state.
Yet was their manner then but bare and plain ;
For th' ántique world excess and pride did hate :
Such proud luxurious pomp is swollen up but late.

¹¹ Common multitude.

¹² Disguised.

¹³ Frighten.

¹⁴ Labour.

¹⁵ Value, excellence.

¹⁶ Discourse ; French, " propos."

¹⁷ Manner (of entertainment).

¹⁸ Examine.

¹⁹ Young dragons.

²⁰ Defeat.

²¹ Provision.

Then, when with meats and drinks of every kind
Their fervent appetites they quenched had,
That ancient lord gan fit occasion find
Of strange adventures, and of perils sad,
Which in his travel him befallen had,
For to demand of his renowned guest :
Who then with utterance grave, and count'n-
ance sad,¹

From point to point, as is before exprest,
Discours'd his voyage long, according² his
request.

Great pleasure, mix'd with pitiful regard,
That goodly king and queen did passionate,³
While they his pitiful adventures heard ;
That oft they did lament his luckless state,
And often blame the too impórtune⁴ fate
That heap'd on him so many wrathful wrecks ;⁵
(For never gentle knight, as he of late,
So toss'd was in Fortune's cruel freaks) ;
And all the while salt tears bedew'd the hearers'
cheeks.

Then said that royal peer in sober wise ;
" Dear son, great be the evils which ye bore
From first to last in your late enterprise,
That I n'ot⁶ whether praise or pity more :
For never living man, I ween, so sore
In sea of deadly dangers was distress :
But since now safe ye seiz'd have the shore,
And well arriv'd are (High God be blest !)
Let us devise⁷ of ease and everlasting rest."

" Ah, dearest Lord," said then that doughty
Knight,

" Of ease or rest I may not yet devise ;
For, by the faith which I to arms have plight',
I bounden am, straight after this emprise,
As that your daughter can ye well advise,
Back to return to that gréat Faery Queen,
And her to serve six years in warlike wise,
'Gainst that proud Paynim king⁸ that works her
teen :⁹

Therefore I ought crave pardon, till I there
have been."

" Unhappy falls that hard necessity,"
Quoth he, " the troubler of my happy peace,
And vow'd foe of my felicity ;
Nor I against the same can justly preace.¹⁰
But since that band¹¹ ye cannot now release,
Nor done undo (for vows may not be vain),
Soon as the term of those six years shall cease,
Ye then shall hither back return again,
The marriage to accomplish vow'd betwixt you
twain :

" Which, for my part, I covet to perform,
In sort as¹² through the world I did proclaim,
That whoso kill'd that monster most deform,
And him in hardy battle overcame,
Should have mine only daughter to his dame,

And of my kingdom heir apparent be :
Therefore, since now to thee pertains the same
By due desert of noble chivalry,
Both daughter and eke kingdom, lo ! I yield to
thee."

Then forth he call'd that his daughter fair,
The fairest Une, his only daughter dear,
His only daughter and his only heir ;
Who, forth proceeding with sad sober cheer,
As bright as doth the morning star appear
Out of the east, with flaming locks bedight,¹³
To tell that dawning day is drawing near,
And to the world does bring long-wish'd light :
Sofair and fresh that Lady show'd herself insight :

So fair and fresh as freshest flower in May ;
For she had laid her mournful stole¹⁴ aside,
And widow-like sad wimple¹⁵ thrown away,
Wherewith her heav'nly beauty she did hide
While on her weary journey she did ride ;
And on her now a garment she did wear
All lily white, withouten spot or pride,
That seem'd like silk and silver woven near ;¹⁶
But neither silk nor silver therein did appear.

The blazing brightness of her beauty's beam,
And glorious light of her sunshiny face,
To tell, were as to strive against the stream :
My ragged rhymes are all too rude and base
Her heav'nly lineaments for to enchase.¹⁷
Nor wonder ; for her own dear lov'd Knight,
All¹⁸ were she daily with himself in place,
Did wonder much at her celestial sight :¹⁹
Oft had he seen her fair, but never so fair
dight.²⁰

So fairly dight when she in presence came,
She to her sire made humble reverence,
And bow'd low, that her right well became,
And added grace unto her excellence :
Who, with great wisdom and grave eloquence,
Thus gan to say — But, ere he thus had said,
With flying speed, and seeming great pretence,²¹
Came running in, much like a man dismay'd,
A messenger with letters which his message said.

All in the open hall amaz'd stood
At suddenness of that unwary²² sight,
And wonder'd at his breathless hasty mood :
But he for naught would stay his passage right,
Till fast before the king he did alight ;
Where, falling flat, great humbless²³ he did
make,
And kiss'd the ground whereon his foot was
pight ;²⁴

Then to his hands that writ²⁵ he did betake,²⁶
Which he disclosing,²⁷ read thus, as the paper
spake :

" To thee, most mighty King of Eden fair,
Her greeting sends, in these sad lines addrest,
The woeful daughter and forsaken heir

¹ Sedate.

² Complying with.

³ Powerfully affect.

⁴ Persistent in persecution.

⁵ Revenges.

⁶ Know not.

⁷ Speak, consider.

⁸ Philip II. of Spain, and his wars against England, are here again intended.

⁹ Harm, trouble.

¹⁰ Preas, urge reasons.

¹¹ Bond, obligation.

¹² Inasmuch as.

¹³ Arrayed, bedecked.

¹⁴ The black robe which she had formerly worn.

¹⁵ Veil.

¹⁶ Together.

¹⁷ Enshrine, worthily describe.

¹⁸ Although.

¹⁹ Aspect.

²⁰ Apparell'd, adorned.

²¹ Assumption of importance.

²² Unexpected.

²³ Reverence.

²⁴ Placed.

²⁵ Written paper.

²⁶ Commit.

²⁷ Opening.

Of that great Emperor of all the West ;
And bids thee be advis'd for the best,¹
Ere thou thy daughter link in holy band
Of wedlock to that new unknown guest :
For he already plight'ed his right hand
Unto another love, and to another land.

"To me, sad maid, or rather widow sad,
He was affianc'd long time before,
And sacred pledges he both gave and had ;
False errant Knight, infamous, and forswore !
Witness the burning altars, which² he swore,
And guilty heav'ns, of his bold perjury ;
Which though he hath polluted oft of yore,
Yet I to them for judgment just do fly,
And them conjure t' avenge this shameful
injury !

"Therefore, since mine he is, or free or bond,³
Or false or true, or living or else dead,
Withhold, O sov'reign Prince, your hasty hand
From knitting league with him, I you aread,⁴
Nor ween⁵ my right with strength adown to
tread,

Through weakness of my widowhood or woe :
For Truth is strong her rightful cause to plead,
And shall find friends, if need requireth so.
So bids thee well to fare, thy neither friend nor
foe, FIDESSA."

When he these bitter biting words had read,
The tidings strange did him abash'd⁶ make,
That still he sat long time astonish'd,
As in great muse, nor word to creature spake.
At last his solemn silence thus he brake,
With doubtful eyes fast fix'd on his guest ;
"Redoubted Knight, that for mine only sake
Thy life and honour late adventarest ;
Let naught be hid from me, that ought to be
express.

"What mean these bloody vows and idle threats,
Thrown out from womanish impatient mind ?
What heav'ns ? what altars ? what enrag'd heats,
Here heap'd up with terms of love unkind,
My conscience clear with guilty bands would
bind ?

High God be witness that I guiltless am !
But if yourself, Sir Knight, ye faulty find,
Or wrapp'd be in loves of former dame,
With crime do not it cover, but disclose the
same."

To whom the Redcross Knight this answer sent ;
"My lord, my king, be naught hereat dismay'd,
Till well ye wot⁷ by grave intendiment,⁸
What woman, and wherefore, doth me upbraid
With breach of love and loyalty betray'd.
It was in my mishaps, as hitherward
I lately travell'd, that unwares I stray'd
Out of my way, through perils strange and hard,
That day should fail me ere I had them all
declar'd.

¹ Well consider.

² By which.

⁴ Advise.

⁵ Confounded.

⁶ Attention.

¹⁰ Una.

⁸ Bound.

⁹ Think.

⁷ Know.

⁹ Attired.

¹¹ Idle, false.

"There did I find, or rather I was found
Of this false woman that Fidessa hight ;
Fidessa hight the falsest dame on ground,
Most false Duesza, royal richly dight,⁹
That easy was t' inveigle weaker sight :
Who, by her wicked arts and wily skill,
Too false and strong for earthly skill or might,
Unwares me wrought unto her wicked will,
And to my foe betray'd when least I fear'd ill."

Then stepp'd forth the goodly royal Maid,¹⁰
And, on the ground herself prostrating low,
With sober countenance thus to him said ;
"O pardon me, my sov'reign lord, to show
The secret treasons, which of late I know
To have been wrought by that false sorceress :
She, only she, it is, that erst did throw
This gentle Knight into so great distress,
That death him did await in daily wretchedness."

"And now it seems, that she suborn'd hath
This crafty messenger, with letters vain,¹¹
To work new woe and unprovided scath,¹²
By breaking of the band betwixt us twain ;
Wherein she us'd hath the practis'd pain¹³
Of this false footman, cloak'd with simpleness,
Whom if ye please for to discover plain,
Ye shall him Archimago find, I guess,
The falsest man alive ; who tries, shall find no
less."

The king was greatly mov'd at her speech ;
And, all with sudden indignation freight,¹⁴
Bade on that messenger rude hands to reach.
Eftsoons the guard, which on his state did wait,
Attach'd that faitour false¹⁵ and bound him
strait :

Who, seeming sorely chaf'd at his band,
As chain'd bear whom cruel dogs do bait,
With idle force did feign them to withstand ;
And often semblance made to scape out of their
hand.

But they him laid full low in dungeon deep,
And bound him hand and foot with iron chains ;
And with continual watch did warely keep.
Who then would think, that by his subtle
trains¹⁶

He could escape foul death or deadly pains ?
Thus, when that Prince's wrath was pacified,
He gan renew the late forbidden banns,¹⁷
And to the Knight his daughter dear he tied
With sacred rites and vows for ever to abide.

His own two hands the holy knots did knit,
That none but death for ever can divide ;
His own two hands, for such a turn most fit,
The houseling¹⁸ fire did kindle and provide,
And holy water thereon sprinkled wide ;
At which the bushy tead¹⁹ a groom did light,
And sacred lamp in secret chamber hide,
Where it should not be quenched day nor night
For fear of evil fates, but burnen ever bright.

¹² Unforeseen mischief.

¹³ The crafty labour, the trickery.

¹⁴ Fraught, filled.

¹⁵ Seized that treacherous malefactor.

¹⁶ Stratagems.

¹⁸ Sacramental.

¹⁷ Banns.

¹⁹ Torch.

Then gan they sprinkle all the posts with wine,
And made great feast to solemnise that day :
They all perfum'd with frankincense divine,
And precious odours fetch'd from far away,
That all the house did sweat with great array :
And all the while sweet music did apply
Her curious skill the warbling notes to play,
To drive away the dull melánochý ;
The while one sung a song of love and jollitý.

During the which there was a heav'nly noise
Heard sound through all the palace pleasantly,
Like as it had been many an angel's voice
Singing before th' Eternal Majesty
In their trinál triplicities¹ on high :
Yet wist no creature whence that heav'nly sweet
Proceeded, yet each one felt secretlý
Himself thereby reft of his senses meet,
And ravishéd with rare impression in his sprite.
Great joy was made that day of young and old,
And solemn feast proclaim'd throughout the
land,
That their exceeding mirth may not be told :
Suffice it here by signs to understand
The usual joys at knitting of love's band.

Thrice happy man the Knight himself did hold,
Possesséd of his Lady's heart and hand ;
And ever, when his eye did her behold,
His heart did seem to melt in pleasures manifold.

Her joyous presence and sweet company
In full content he there did long enjoy ;
Nor wicked envy, nor vile jealousy,
His dear delights were able to annoy :
Yet, swimming in that sea of blissful joy,
He naught forgot how he whilóm had sworn,
In case he could that monstrous beast destroy,
Unto his Faery Queen back to return ;
The which he shortly did, and Una left to
mourn.

Now strike your sails, ye jolly mariners,
For we be come unto a quiet road,²
Where we must land some of our passengers,
And light this weary vessel of her load ;
Here she a while may make her safe abode,
Till she repairéd have her tackles spent,³
And wants supplied ; and then again abroad
On the long voyage whereto she is bent :
Well may she speed, and fairly finish her
intent !⁴

THE SECOND BOOK

OF

THE FAERIE QUEEN:

CONTAINING

THE LEGEND OF SIR GUYON, OR OF TEMPERANCE.

RIGHT well I wot, most mighty Sovereign,
That all this famous ántique history
Of⁵ some th' abundance of an idle brain
Will judgéd be, and painted forgery,
Rather than matter of just memory ;
Since none that breatheth living air doth know
Where is that happy land of Faëry
Which I so much do vaunt, yet nowhere show ;
But vouch antiquities, which nobody can know.

But let that man with better sense advise⁶
That of the world least part to us is read ;⁷
And daily how, through hardy enterprise,
Many great regions are discoveréd
Which to late age were never mentionéd.
Who ever heard of th' Indian Peru ?
Or who in venturous vessel measuréd
The Amazon huge river, now found true ?
Or fruitfulest Virginia who did ever view ?

Yet all these were, when no man did them know,

Yet have from wisest ages hidden been ;
And later times things more unknown shall show.
Why then should witless man so much misween⁸
That nothing is, but that which he hath seen ?
What if, within the moon's fair shining sphere,
What if, in every other star unseen,
Of other worlds he happily⁹ should hear ?
He wonder would much more ; yet such to some
appear.

Of Faery Land yet if he more inquire,
By certain signs, here set in sundry place,
He may it find ; nor let him then admire,¹⁰
But yield¹¹ his sense to be too blunt and base,
That n'ot¹² without a hound fine footing trace.
And thou, O fairest Princess¹³ under sky,
In this fair mirror may'st behold thy face,
And thine own realms in land of Faëry,
And in this ántique image thy great ancestry.

The which, O ! pardon me thus to enfold
In covert veil, and wrap in shadows light,
That feeble eyes your glory may behold,
Which else could not endure those beamés bright,
But would be dazzled with exceeding light.
O ! pardon, and vouchsafe with patient ear
The brave adventures of this Faery Knight,
The good Sir Guyon, graciously to hear ;
In whom great rule of Temp'rance goodly doth
appear.

¹ In their three hierarchies, with three ranks in each hierarchy.

² Roadstead, anchorage.

³ Worn out.

⁴ Designed voyage.

⁵ By.

⁶ Consider.

⁷ Known, discovered.

⁸ So wrongly think.

⁹ Perchance, haply.

¹⁰ Wonder.

¹¹ Confess.

¹² Knows not, cannot.

¹³ Queen Elizabeth.

CANTO I.

*Guyon, by Archimago abus'd,
The Redcross Knight awaits :
Finds Mordant and Amavia slain
With Pleasure's poison'd baits.*

ARCHIMAGO, "that cunning architect of canker'd guile," when he knew that the Redcross Knight had quitted Eden lands, freed himself from prison; "his shackles empty left, himself escap'd clean." He went forth, full of malice, to work the Knight mischief and avenging woe, wherever he might find "his only heart-sore and his only foe;" since the Knight must needs quit Una, who now at last "enjoys sure peace for evermore, as weather-beaten ship arriv'd on happy shore." But all Archimago's craft, espial, and endeavour to catch his foe at vantage in his snares, were fruitless; the Knight "descried, and shunn'd still, his sleight; the fish that once was caught, new bait will hardly bite."

Nathless th' enchanter would not spare his pain,
In hope to win occasion to his will;
Which when he long awaited had in vain,
He chang'd his mind from one to other ill:
For to all good he enemy was still.
Upon the way him fortun'd to meet,
Fair marching underneath a shady hill,
A goodly knight, all arm'd in harness meet,
That from his head no place appear'd to his feet.

His carriage was full comely and upright;
His countenance demure and temperate;
But yet so stern and terrible in sight,
That cheer'd his friends, and did his foes amate:¹
He was an Elfin born, of noble state
And mickle worship² in his native land;
Well could he tourney, and in lists debate,³
And knighthood took of good Sir Huon's hand,
When with king Oberon he came to Faery land.

Him als⁴ accompanied upon the way
A comely Palmer,⁵ clad in black attire,
Of ripest years, and hairs all hoary gray,
That with a staff his feeble steps did stire,⁶
Lest his long way his aged limbs should tire:
And, if by looks one may the mind aread,⁷
He seem'd to be a sage and sober sire;
And ever with slow pace the Knight did lead,
Who taught his trampling steed with equal
steps to tread.

Archimago, seeing them, "ween'd well to work some uncouth wile;" and straightway, "untwisting his deceitful clue, he gan to weave a web of wicked guile." Feigning to quake and tremble with fear, he prayed Sir Guyon to "stay his steed for humble miser's (wretch's) sake," and began to lament the dishonour of his lady by a lewd ribald knight. His piteous tale, "of chastity and honour virginal" shamefully

outraged, inflamed Sir Guyon with wrath against the violator; and he asked how he might trace him out, to avenge the wrong. "That shall I show," said the crafty Archimago, "as sure as hound the stricken deer doth challenge by the bleeding wound."

He stay'd not longer talk, but with fierce ire
And zealous haste away is quickly gone
To seek that knight, where him that crafty squire
Suppos'd to be. They do arrive anon
Where sat a gentle lady all alone,
With garments rent, and hair dishevell'd,
Wringing her hands, and making piteous moan:
Her swollen eyes were much disfigur'd,
And her fair face with tears was foully blubber'd.

Approaching nigh, the Knight endeavoured to comfort her, praying her to "tell the cause of her conceiv'd pain;" for if he who had wronged her lived, he should her "do due recompense again, or else his wrong with greater puissance maintain." But her sorrow only redoubled; she tore her hair, scratched and hid her face, and bent down her head, "either for grievous shame, or for great teen" (grief). The soothing speech of her squire somewhat appeased her sorrow; and she at last described the false traitor that reft her honour. She knew not his name, but he rode a gray steed whose sides were marked with dappled circles, "and in his silver shield he bore a bloody cross, that quarter'd all the field." Guyon much wondered "how that same knight should do so foul amiss;" for he at once recognised him as the Redcross Knight, who had won so great glory in "the adventure of the Errant Damosell" (Una). Nevertheless, if he had done such a wrong, he should dear abide it, or make good amends; for "all wrongs have mends, but no amends of shame." He called on her to rise out of her pain, and see "the salving of her blotted name;" and with seeming reluctance, but inward joy, she complied.

Her purpose was not such as she did feign,
Nor yet her person such as it was seen;
But under simple show, and semblant⁸ plain,
Lurk'd false Duesse secretly unseen,
As a chaste virgin that had wrong'd been;
So had false Archimago her disguis'd,
To cloak her guile with sorrow and sad teen:⁹
And eke himself had craftily devis'd
To be her squire, and do her service well aguis'd.¹⁰

Her late, forlorn and naked, he had found
Where she did wander in waste wilderness,
Lurking in rocks and caves far under ground,
And with green moss cov'ring her nakedness,
To hide her shame and loathly filthiness,
Since her Prince Arthur of proud ornaments
And borrow'd beauty spoil'd: her nath'less
Th' enchanter, finding fit for his intents,
Did thus reveat,¹¹ and deck'd with due habli-
ments.

¹ Terrify, confound. ² Much honour.
³ Do battle, contend. ⁴ Also.
⁵ Personifying Reason, the constant attendant and guide of Temperance.

⁶ Steer.
⁷ Discern, read. ⁸ Appearance.
⁹ Grief. ¹⁰ Equipped.
¹¹ Reclothes; French, "revêtir."

For all he did was to deceive good knights,
And draw them from pursuit of praise and fame,
To slug¹ in sloth and sensual delights,
And end their days with unrenown'd shame :
And now exceeding grief him overcame,
To see the Redcross thus advanc'd high ;
Therefore this crafty engine² he did frame,
Against his praise to stir up enmity
Of such as virtues like³ might unto him ally.

So now he Guyon guides an uncouth way,
Through woods and mountains, till they came
at last

Into a pleasant dale that lowly lay
Betwixt two hills, whose high heads, overplac'd,
The valley did with cool shade overcast ;
Through midst thereof a little river roll'd,
By which there sat a knight with helm unlac'd,
Himself refreshing with the liquid cold,
After his travel long and labours manifold.

Archimago cried aloud that yonder was the
false knight, shrouding himself in secret to shun
due vengeance ; and, while the lady and her
squire abode far off to view the encounter, Sir
Guyon, inflamed with wrathfulness, "straight
against that knight his spear he did redress." The
Redcross Knight seized his arms, laid lance
in rest, and "gan rencounter him in equal race ;"
but suddenly Sir Guyon lowered his spear, and
besought mercy from his opponent and from God,
for his offence and heedless boldness in bending
cursed steel against that sacred badge of his
Redeemer's death, set on the other's shield for
ornament. The Redcross Knight, with difficulty
staying his steed, met Sir Guyon's apologies
with counter-apologies for the hasty hand that
had almost done heinous violence on the fair
image of that heavenly maid that decked his
shield. "So be they both at one ;" they raise
their beavers bright to greet each other ; the
falsehood which provoked Sir Guyon to his fierce
attack is explained ; and the aged Palmer, com-
ing up, recognises and salutes fairly the Redcross
Knight, praying for happy chance for him and
that dear cross upon his shield.

"Joy may you have, and everlasting fame,
Of late most hard achievement by you done,
For which enroll'd is your glorious name
In heav'nly registers above the sun,
Where you a saint with saints your seat have
won !

But wretched we, where ye have left your mark,
Must now anew begin like race to run.
God guide thee, Guyon, well to end thy wark,⁴
And to the wish'd haven bring thy weary bark !"

"Palmer," him answer'd the Redcross Knight,
"His be the praise, that this achievement
wrought,

Who made my hand the organ of His might !
More than good will to me attribute naught ;
For all I did, I did but as I ought.

¹ Lie sluggishly, live idly.

² Means, contrivance.

³ Similar virtues to his own.

⁴ Work.

⁵ Splendid achievement, glory of a completed enter-
prise.

But you, fair Sir, whose pageant⁵ next ensues,
Well may ye thê,⁶ as well can wish your thought,
That home ye may report thrice happy news !
For well ye worthy be for worth and gentle
thews."⁷

So courteous congé⁸ both did give and take,
With right hands plighted, pledges of good will.
Then Guyon forward gan his voyage make
With his black Palmer, that him guided still :
Still he him guided over dale and hill,
And with his steady staff did point his way ;
His race with reason, and with words his will,
From foul intemperance he oft did stay,
And suffer'd not in wrath his hasty steps to stray.

Thus they travelled long, through many hard
but glorious adventures ; until, as they passed
by a forest side, "for succour from the scorching
ray," they heard a rueful voice, crying mourn-
fully "with piercing shrieks, and many a dole-
ful lay." It was the voice of a lady, who called
on sweetest Death to "take away this long-lent
loathed light ;" and who wished for her sweet
babe—whom frowning froward fate had made
sad witness of his father's fall—that he might
live long and better thrive than his luckless
parents. To his dead mother he is to "attest
that clear she died from blemish criminal ;"
and she added, "thy little hands embrued in
bleeding breast, lo, I for pledges leave ! so give
me leave to rest."

With that a deadly shriek she forth did throw,
That through the wood re-echo'd again ;
And after gave a groan so deep and low,
That seem'd her tender heart was rent in twain,
Or thrill'd with point of thorough-piercing pain :
As gentle hind, whose sides with cruel steel
Throughlanc'd, forth her bleeding life does rain,
While the sad pang approaching she does feel,
Brays out⁹ her latest breath, and up her eyes
doth seal.

Which when that warrior heard, dismounting
straight

From his tall steed, he rush'd into the thick,¹⁰
And soon arriv'd where that sad portrait¹¹
Of death and dolour lay, half dead, half quick ;
In whose white alabaster breast did stick
A cruel knife that made a grisly wound,
From which forth gush'd a stream of gore-blood
thick,

That all her goodly garments stain'd around,
And into a deep sanguine dy'd the grassy ground.

Pitiful spectacle of deadly smart,
Beside a bubbling fountain low she lay
Which she increas'd with her bleeding heart,
And the clean waves with purple gore did ray :¹²
Als' in her lap a lovely babe did play
His cruel sport, instead of sorrow due ;
For in her streaming blood he did embay¹³
His little hands, and tender joints embrue :
Pitiful spectacle as ever eye did view !

⁶ Prosper.

⁷ Noble qualities.

⁸ Leaves.

⁹ Breathes out hard or loudly.

¹⁰ Thicket.

¹¹ Image.

¹² Streak, defile.

¹³ Bathe.

Beside them both, upon the soiled grass
The dead corse of an armed knight was spread,
Whose armour all with blood besprinkled was ;
His ruddy lips did smile, and rosy red
Did paint his cheerful cheeks, yet¹ being dead ;
Seem'd to have been a goodly personage,
Now in his freshest flow'r of lustihead,²
Fit to inflame fair lady with love's rage,
But that fierce fate did crop the blossom of his age.

Beholding this sight, Sir Guyon's "heart gan wax as stark as marble stone, and his fresh blood did freeze with fearful cold;" but, recovering himself, "out of her gor'd wound the cruel steel he lightly snatch'd, and did the floodgate stop with his fair garment." Feeling her pulse move, he hoped "to call back life to her forsaken shop," and at last was rejoiced to find her "breathe out living air." Gently he inquired the cause of her cruel plight: "Speak, O dear lady, speak! help never comes too late." Raising up her dim eyelids, "on which the dreary death did sit as sad as lump of lead, and make dark clouds appear," she saw the Knight all in bright armour clad, and threw herself down again to the ground, as hating life and light. Thrice the gentle Knight reared her up, thrice she sank again; till he folded his arms about her sides, and again entreated her to tell her grief. She prayed to be left in peace to die; but his importunity prevailed at last, and, "with feeble hands then stretched forth on high, as heav'n accusing guilty of her death," she told him that the dead corpse lying near once "the gentlest knight that ever on green grass gay steed with spurs did prick, the good Sir Mordant, was." He was her lord, her love, her dear lord, her dear love; and, riding forth to seek adventure, he left her "enwomb'd of this child, this luckless child."

"Him fortun'd (hard fortune ye may guess!)
To come where vile Acrasia³ does won;⁴
Acrasia, a false enchanteress,
That many errant knights has foul fordone;⁵
Within a wand'ring island, that doth run
And stray in perilous gulf, her dwelling is:
Fair Sir, if ever there ye travel, shun
The curs'd land where many wend⁶ amiss,
And know it by the name: it hight the *Bower of Bliss*.

"Her bliss is all in pleasure and delight,
Wherewith she makes her lovers drunken mad;
And then, with words and weeds⁷ of wondrous might,
On them she works her will to uses bad:
My liefest⁸ lord she thus beguil'd had;
For he was flesh (all flesh doth frailty breed!)

¹ Though.

² Pleasantness, youthful beauty.

³ Excess or Intemperance; from the Greek, *ακρασια*; "acrasia" is a word employed in medicine in the same sense.

⁴ Dwelt.

⁵ Ruined.

⁶ Go.

⁷ Herbs.

⁸ Dearest.

⁹ So ill bestead; in such a grievous plight.

Whom when I heard to be so ill bestad,⁹
(Weak wretch) I wrapt myself in palmer's weed,¹⁰
And cast¹¹ to seek him forth through danger
and great dread.

"Now had fair Cynthia by even turns
Full measur'd three quarters of her year,
And thrice three times had fill'd her crooked
horns,
When as my womb her burden would forbear,¹²
And bade me call Lucina¹³ to me near.
Lucina came: a man-child forth I brought:
The woods, the nymphs, my bow'rs,¹⁴ my mid-
wives, were:
Hard help at need! So dear thee, babe, I
bought;
Yet naught too dear I deem'd, while so my dear
I sought."

She found at last her lord, "in chains of lust and lewd desires y-bound," and so changed, that he knew neither his lady nor his own ill; but she succeeded in restoring him to a better will, and began to devise means for his deliverance. This the enchantress perceiving, gave him at parting to drink from a cup thus charmed:

"Sad verse,¹⁵ give death to him that death
does give,
And loss of love to her that loves to live,
So soon as Bacchus with the Nymph does link!"¹⁶

Stooping to drink at the fountain hard by, the charm worked, and he fell dead—But at this point the poor lady breaks off for want of breath, and sliding soft, lays her down in the sleep of death. Sir Guyon, unable to bear the sight, averts his head;

Then, turning to his Palmer, said; "Old Sire,
Behold the image of mortality,
And feeble nature cloth'd with fleshy tire!¹⁷
When raging Passion with fierce tyranny
Robs Reason of her due regality,
And makes it servant to her basest part;
The strong it weakens with infirmity,
And with bold fury arms the weakest heart:
The strong through pleasure soonest falls, the
weak through smart."

"But Temperance," said he, "with golden
squire¹⁸
Betwixt them both can measure out a mean;
Neither to melt in pleasure's hot desire,
Nor fry¹⁹ in heartless grief and doleful teen:²⁰
Thrice happy man, who fares them both atween!
But since this wretched woman overcome
Of anguish, rather than of crime, hath been,
Reserve her cause to her eternal doom;
And, in the mean,²¹ vouchsafe her honourable
tomb."

"Palmer," quoth he, "death is an equal doom

¹⁰ Garment.

¹¹ Get rid of, cease to bear.

¹² Diana. See note 17, page 37.

¹³ Chambers.

¹⁴ So soon as the wine in the cup shall be mixed with

water.

¹⁵ Square, rule.

¹⁶ Square, rule.

¹⁷ Attire.

¹⁸ Burn.

¹⁹ Burn.

²⁰ Borrow.

²¹ Resolved.

²² Fatal spell.

²³ Attire.

²⁴ Burn.

²⁵ Burn.

²⁶ Burn.

²⁷ Burn.

²⁸ Burn.

²⁹ Burn.

³⁰ Burn.

To good and bad, the common inn of rest;
But after death the trial is to come,
When best shall be to them that liv'd best:
But both alike, when death hath both supprest,
Religious reverence doth burial teen;¹
Which whoso wants, wants so much of his rest:
For all so great shame after death I ween,
As self to dien bad, unburied bad to been.²

Then "the great earth's womb they open to
the sky," and emgrave or adorn the grave "with
sad cypress seemly;" therein, "cov'ring with
a clod their clos'd eye," they tenderly lay the
bodies; but first Guyon, drawing the dead
knight's sword out of its sheath, cuts a lock of
all their hair, mingles it with their blood and
earth, casts it into their grave, and swears a
solemn vow that neither he nor the orphan shall
ever forbear due vengeance; "so, shedding
many tears, they clos'd the earth again."

CANTO II.

*Babe's bloody hands may not be cleans'd.
The face of Golden Mean:
Her sisters, Two Extremities,
Strive her to banish clean.*

SIR GUYON, having thus "with due rites and
dolorous lament" performed the obsequies of
Mordant and Amavia, took up the babe, that
smiled on him when it should rather weep; and,
"soft himself inclining on his knee down to
that well," tried, but in vain, to wash the gore
from the little hands. In great amazement, he
asked himself whether the "blot of foul offence
might not be purg'd with water or with bath"—
or whether God had imprinted that token of his
wrath to show how sore he hates blood-guilti-
ness—or whether the charm and venom had in-
fected the blood with secret filth. The Palmer,
Reason, seeing him "at gaze," explained his
error. Secret virtues, he said, are infused in
every fountain and in every lake.

"Of those, some were so from their source in-
duced

By great Dame Nature, from whose fruitful pap
Their well-heads spring, and are with moisture
dew'd;

Which feeds each living plant with liquid sap,
And fills with flow'rs fair Flora's painted lap:
But other some, by gift of later grace,
Or by good prayers, or by other hap,
Had virtue pour'd into their waters base,
And thenceforth were renown'd, and sought from
place to place.

"Such is this well, wrought by occasion strange
Which to her nymph befell. Upon a day,
As she the woods with bow and shafts did range,
The heartless³ hind and roebuck to dismay,
Dan Faunus chanc'd to meet her by the way,
And, kindling fire at her fair-burning eye,

¹ Require. ² To be unburied bad, as to die bad.
³ Timid. ⁴ Distress.
⁵ Companion. ⁶ Proved.

Inflam'd was to follow beauty's chase,
And chas'd her, that fast from him did fly;
As hind from her, so she fled from her enemy.

"At last, when failing breath began to faint,
And saw no means to scape; of shame afraid,
She sat her down to weep for sore constraint;⁴
And, to Diana calling loud for aid,
Her dear besought to let her die a maid.
The goddess heard; and sudden, where she sate
Welling out streams of tears, and quite dismay'd
With stony fear of that rude rustic mate,⁵
Transform'd her to a stone from steadfast vir-
gin's state.

"Lo! now she is that stone; from whose two
heads,
As from two weeping eyes, fresh streams do flow,
Yet cold through fear and old conceiv'd dreads:
And yet the stone her semblance seems to show,
Shap'd like a maid, that such ye may her know;
And yet her virtues in her water bide:
For it is chaste and pure as purest snow,
Nor lets her waves with any filth be dy'd;
But ever, like herself, unstain'd hath been
tried.⁶

"From thence it comes, that this babe's bloody
hand

May not be cleans'd with water of this well:
Nor certes, Sir, strive you it to withstand,
But let them still be bloody, as befell,
That they his mother's innocence may tell,
As she bequeath'd in her last testament;
That, as a sacred symbol, it may dwell
In her son's flesh, to mind revengement,⁷
And be for all chaste dames an endless monu-
ment."⁸

The Knight "hearkened to his reason," took
up the child, and gave him to the Palmer to
bear; he himself carried the dead father's bloody
armour; and they returned to the place where
Guyon's steed had been left, only to find it gone.
Subduing his anger, the Knight fared along on
foot, though toiling under his double burden;
so they travelled long with little ease, till they
came to a rock-built castle by the sea: "an
ancient work of antique fame, and wondrous
strong by nature and by skilful frame."

Therein three sisters dwelt of sundry sort,
The children of one sire by mothers three;
Who, dying whilom, did divide this fort
To them by equal shares in equal fee:
But strifeful mind and diverse quality
Drew them in parts,⁹ and each made other's foe:
Still did they strive and daily disagree;
The eldest did against the youngest go,
And both against the middest meant to worken
woe.

Where when the Knight arriv'd, he was right
well

Receiv'd, as knight of so much worth became,
Of second sister, who did far excel
The other two; Medina¹⁰ was her name,

⁷ To remind him of his duty of revenge.
⁸ Lesson, reminder. ⁹ Apart; into quarrel.
¹⁰ Moderation, or Golden Mean.

A sober, sad,¹ and comely courteous dame :
Who rich array'd, and yet in modest guise,
In goodly garments that her well became,
Fair marching forth in honourable wise,
Him at the threshold met and well did enter-
prise.²

She led him up into a goodly bow'r,
And comely courted³ with meet modesty ;
Nor in her speech, nor in her 'haviour,
Was lightness seen or looser vanity,
But gracious womanhood, and gravity
Above the reason⁴ of her youthly years :
Her golden locks she roundly did uptie
In braided trammels,⁵ that no looser hairs
Did out of order stray about her dainty ears.

News of Guyon's arrival come to her sisters,
who "are at their wanton rest, accourting
each her friend with lavish feast." The eldest,
Eliasa or Deficiency, has for her suitor Sir Hud-
dibras, "a hardy man, yet not so good of
deeds as great of name," which he had won by
many rash adventures ; "more huge in strength
than wise in works he was," foolhardy, morose,
and, for greater terror, "all arm'd in shining
brass." The youngest sister, Perissa or Excess,
is loved by Sansloy, "he that fair Una late foul
outrag'd ; the most unruly and the boldest
boy" that ever wielded arms. The two knights
regard each other with deadly hate, and move
daily battle against each other, to advance them-
selves in their ladies' favour. At the news of
Guyon's arrival, "both knights and ladies forth
right angry fared, and fiercely unto battle
stern themselves prepared." But on the way
the knights' momentary agreement against the
stranger breaks down, and they join cruel com-
bat in middle space, with an uproar that alarms
the whole house, as if a thunderstorm were
raging. Guyon, binding "his sunbroad shield
about his wrist," runs "with shining blade un-
sheathed" to learn the cause of quarrel, "and,
at his first arrival, them began with goodly
means to pacify, well as he can."

But they, him spying, both with greedy force
At once upon him ran, and him beset
With strokes of mortal steel without remorse,
And on his shield like iron sledges bet.⁶
As when a bear and tiger, being met
In cruel fight on Libyc ocean⁷ wide,
Espy a traveller with feet surbet,⁸
Whom they in equal prey hope to divide,
They stint their strife, and him assail on every
side.

But he, not like a weary traveller,
Their sharp assault right boldly did rebut,
And suffer'd not their blows to bite him near,
But with redoubled buffs them back did put ;
Whose griev'd minds, which choler did englut,⁹
Against themselves turning their wrathful spite,
Gan with new rage their shields to hew and cut.

¹ Grave.² Entertained.³ Reasonable power or expectation.⁴ Nets ; Italian, "tramaglio ;" French, "travail."⁵ Beat like sledge-hammers.⁶ Receive.

But still, when Guyon came to part their fight,
With heavy load on him they freshly gan to
smite.

As a tall ship, toss'd in troublous seas,
Whom raging winds, threat'ning to make the
prey

Of the rough rocks, do diversely disease,¹⁰
Meets two contrary billows by the way,
That her on either side do sore assay,
And boast to swallow her in greedy grave ;
She, scorning both their spite, does make wide
way,
And, with her breast breaking the foamy wave,
Does ride on both their backs, and fair herself
doth save :

So boldly he him bears, and rushes forth
Between them both, by conduct of his blade.
Wondrous great prowess and heroic worth
He show'd that day, and rare ensample made,
When two so mighty warriors he dismay'd :
At once he wards and strikes ; he takes and
pays ;

Now forc'd to yield, now forcing to invade ;
Before, behind, and round about him lays :
So double was his pains, so double be his praise.

Strange sort of fight, three valiant knights to see
Three combats join in one, and to darrain¹¹

A triple war with triple enmity,
All for their ladies' froward love¹² to gain,
Which, gotten, was but hate. So Love does
reign

In stoutest minds, and maketh monstrous war :
He maketh war, he maketh peace again,
And yet his peace is but continual jar :
O miserable man, that to him subject are !

Whilst thus they mingled were in furious arms,
The fair Medina, with her tresses torn,
And naked breast, in pity of their harms,
Amongst them ran ; and, falling them before,
Besought them by the womb which them had
borne,

And by the loves which were to them most dear,
And by the knighthood which they sure had
sworn,

Their deadly cruel discord to forbear,
And to her just conditions of fair peace to hear.

But her sisters opposed her counsel, and
urged their knights to "pursue the end of their
strong enmity ;" still Medina persisted, until,
"suppressing fury mad," the combatants de-
sisted and listened to her "sober speeches." She
asked if this was the joy of arms—if these
were the parts of noble knighthood ? "Vain is
the vaunt, and victory unjust, that more to
mighty hands than rightful cause doth trust."

"And were there rightful cause of difference,
Yet were not better fair it to accord,
Than with blood-guiltiness to heap offence,
And mortal vengeance join to crime abhorr'd ?

⁷ The Libyan desert, or ocean of sand.⁸ For "surbated ;" sore beaten, bruised, wearied.⁹ Gorge.¹⁰ Distress.¹¹ Wage.¹² The love of their ladies, who, all at variance, de-
mand of each different service.

O ! fly from wrath ; fly, O my liefast¹ lord !
 Sad be the sights and bitter fruits of war,
 And thousand furies wait on wrathful sword :
 Nor aught the praise of prowess more doth mar
 Than foul revenging rage, and base contentious
 jar.

"But lovely concord, and most sacred peace,
 Doth nourish virtue, and fast friendship breeds ;
 Weak she makes strong, and strong thing does
 increase,

Till it the pitch of highest praise exceeds :
 Brave be her wars, and honourable deeds,
 By which she triumphs over ire and pride,
 And wins an olive garland for her meeds.
 Be therefore, O my dear lords ! pacified,
 And this misseeming² discord meekly lay aside."

Her gracious words assuaged their ran-
 cour, and, dropping their cruel weapons, they
 "lowly did abase their lofty crests to her
 fair presence and discreet behests." She laid
 the basis of an agreement which should "stab-
 lish terms betwixt both their requests ;" and,
 to confirm the treaty of peace, she invited them
 to her lodging, where they were well received,
 and prepared "their minds to pleasure and
 their mouths to dainty fare." The two froward
 sisters also came, though much against their
 mind ; both grudging and grieving inwardly
 against their second sister, "as doth a hidden
 moth the inner garment fret, not th' outer
 touch : one thought her cheer too little, th'
 other thought too much."

Elissa (so the eldest hight) did deem
 Such entertainment base, nor aught would eat,
 Nor aught would speak, but evermore did seem
 As discontent³ for want of mirth or meat :
 No solace could her paramour intreat⁴
 Her once to show, nor court, nor dalliance ;
 But with bent luring brows, as she would
 threat,
 She scowl'd, and frown'd with froward coun-
 tenance ;
 Unworthy of fair lady's comely governance.

But young Perissa was of other mind,
 Full of disport, still laughing, loosely light,
 And quite contrary to her sister's kind ;⁵
 No measure in her mood, no rule of right,
 But poured out in pleasure and delight :
 In wine and meats she flow'd above the bank,
 And in excess exceeded her own might ;
 In sumptuous tire⁶ she joy'd herself to prank,⁷
 But of her love too lavish : little have she thank !

By her sat bold Sansloy, "fit mate for such
 a mincing minion ;" while Huddibras, "more
 like a malecontent," grieving at the other's bold
 fashion, sat still, "and inly did himself tor-
 ment."

Betwixt them both the fair Medina sate,
 With sober grace and goodly carriage :
 With equal measure she did moderate

¹ Dearest.

² Discontented.

³ Nature.

⁴ Adorn vainly or coquettishly.

⁵ Unseemly.

⁶ Induce by entreaties.

⁷ Attire.

The strong extremities of their outrage ;
 The froward pair⁸ she ever would assuage,⁹
 When they would strive due reason to exceed ;
 But that same froward twain¹⁰ would accorage,¹¹
 And of her plenty add unto their need :
 So kept she them in order, and herself in heed.

Thus fairly attempering her feast, she "pleas'd
 them all with meet satiety ;" and at the end
 besought Guyon of courtesy to tell "whence he
 came through jeopardy, and whither now on
 new adventure bound." The Knight complied.
 Having loftily lauded the Queen of Faery Land
 —"most great and most glorious Virgin Queen
 alive"—to whom he owes homage and service,
 and who has conferred on him the most renowned
 Order of Maidenhead, he relates that at the
 yearly solemn feast which she is wont to hold,
 on "the day that first doth lead the year
 around," the old Palmer, now his companion,
 presented himself with a complaint against a
 wicked Fay, who had wrought grievous mis-
 chiefs, "and many whelmed in deadly pain."
 The Queen, "whose glory is in gracious deeds,"
 employed him, all unfit, to work redress for
 such annoys ; and "now hath fair Phoebe with
 her silver face thrice seen the shadows of
 the nether world" since he quitted Faery Court.
 Never shall he rest in house or hold till he
 that false Acrasia has won ; and then he tells
 the story of Mordant and Amavia, whose little
 son is witness of the enchantress's foul deeds.

Night was far spent ; and now in ocean deep
 Orion, flying fast from hissing Snake,¹²
 His flaming head did hasten for to steep,
 When of his piteous tale he end did make :
 Whilst with delight of that he wisely spake
 Those guests beguil'd, did beguile their eyes
 Of kindly sleep, that did them overtake.
 At last, when they had mark'd the chang'd skies,
 They wist their hour was spent ; then each to
 rest him hies.

CANTO III.

*Vain Braggadocio, getting Guy-
 on's horse, is made the scorn
 Of knighthood true ; and is of fair
 Belphabe foul forlorn.*

SOON as the morrow fair with purple beams
 Dispers'd the shadows of the misty night,
 And Titan, playing on the eastern streams,
 Can clear the dewy air with springing light—

Sir Guyon rose from drowsy couch, armed
 himself, and continued his journey ; having
 first taken leave of that Virgin pure, into whose
 care he committed the bloody-handed babe, to
 be trained in virtuous lore, and, when he reached
 riper years, to be called "Ruddymane"—or

⁸ Sansloy and Perissa.

⁹ Restrain.

¹⁰ Huddibras and Elissa.

¹¹ Encourage, stimulate.

¹² Setting when Scorpio rises.

Bloody-hand—that so he might be taught to
avenge his parents' death. So forth he fared
on foot, for he had lately lost his good steed.
He had left the horse outside the wood where
he heard the dying lady's groan:

The while a losel¹ wand'ring by the way,
One that to bounty² never cast his mind,
Nor thought of honour ever did assay
His baser breast, but in his kestrel kind³
A pleasing vein of glory he did find,
To which his flowing tongue and troublous⁴
sprite
Gave him great aid, and made him more
inclin'd ;
He, that brave steed there finding ready dight,
Purloin'd both steed and spear, and ran away
full light.

Now gan his heart all swell in jollity,
And of himself great hope and help conceiv'd,
That puff'd up with smoke of vanity,
And with self-lov'd personage deceiv'd,
He gan to hope of men to be receiv'd
For such as he him thought, or fain would be :⁵
But, for⁶ in Court gay portance⁷ he perceiv'd,
And gallant show, to be in greatest gree,⁸
Eftsoons to Court he cast⁹ t' advance his first
degree.

And by the way he chanc'd to espy
One sitting idle on a sunny bank,
To whom advancing in great bravery,
As peacock that his painted plumes doth
prank,¹⁰

He smote his courser in the trembling flank,
And to him threat'ned his heart-thrilling spear :
The silly man, seeing him ride so rank¹¹
And aim at him, fell flat to ground for fear,
And crying, "Mercy!" loud, his piteous hands
gan rear.

Thereat the scarecrow wax'd wondrous proud,
Through fortune of his first adventure fair,
And with big thund'ring voice revil'd him loud ;
"Vile caitive, vassal of dread and despair,
Unworthy of the common breath'd air,
Why livest thou, dead dog, a longer day,
And dost not unto death thyself prepare ?
Die, or thyself my captive yield for ay.
Great favour I thee grant for answer thus to
stay."

The wretch, yielding himself Braggadocio's
humble thrall, kissed his stirrup, and hailed
him as his liege lord. By and by the liegeman
began to wax more bold, "and, when he felt
the folly of his lord," to display his own true
nature. From that day he contrived to uphold
his master's idle humour with fine flattery,
"and blow the bellows to his swelling vanity."

Trompart,¹² fit man for Braggadocio
To serve at Court in view of vaunting eye ;

Vain-glorious man, when flutt'ring wind does
blow

In his light wings, is lifted up to sky ;
The scorn of knighthood and true chivalry,
To think, without desert of gentle deed
And noble worth, to be advanc'd high ;
Such praise is shame ; but honour, virtue's meed,
Doth bear the fairest flow'r in honourable
seed.

"So forth they pass, a well-consorted pair,"
till they meet Archimago, whom the brave array
of Braggadocio deceives into thinking him a
meet instrument for his vengeance on Sir Guyon ;
against whom he has turned the malice formerly
cherished against the Redcross Knight. He
asks Trompart what mighty warrior that may
be that rides in golden saddle, with spear alone,
and no sword. Trompart replies, that his master
is a great adventurer, who has lost his sword
through hard assay, and vowed to wear none
till he should be avenged. The enchanter, glad
at heart, and louting low, then complains to
Braggadocio of wrongs done by Sir Guyon and
the Redcross Knight, whom he charges with the
murder of Mordant and Amavia. Braggado-
cio seems all suddenly enraged, and threatens
death with dreadful countenance, shaking his
spear. He calls on Archimago to tell him
where those knights lurk ; and the enchanter
promises to guide him, while earnestly advising
him to give no odds to his valiant foes, but
provide himself with a sword. Braggadocio
scouts the advice of the "dotard" who measures
manhood by the sword or mail, and asks : "Is
not enough four quarters of a man, withouten
sword or shield, a host to quail?"—for Archi-
mago little suspects the power of that right
hand. The enchanter is surprised at his boast,
knowing that whoever encountered either of
the knights would need all his arms ; but Brag-
gadocio caps his own vaunt by the declaration
that once he swore, when with one sword seven
knights he brought to end, thenceforth never
to bear sword in battle, "but it were that which
noblest knight on earth doth wear." Reassured,
Archimago promises to procure by the morrow
the sword of Prince Arthur, "the best and
noblest knight alive"—a "sword that flames
like burning brand ;" "at which bold word
that boaster gan to quake, and wonder in
his mind what might that portent make"
(signify).

He¹³ stay'd not for more bidding, but away
Was sudden vanish'd out of his sight :
The northern wind his wings did broad display
At his command, and rear'd him up light
From off the earth, to take his airy flight.
They look'd about, but nowhere could espy
Track of his foot: then dead through great
affright

¹ Loose fellow.

² Goodness.

³ Base nature : a kestrel is a species of hawk, which
was trained to fly at small game.

⁴ Restless.

⁵ Such as he thought himself, or would fain be
thought by others.

⁶ Because

⁷ Carriage.

⁸ Favour.

⁹ Purposed to go.

¹⁰ Proudly or conceitedly display.

¹¹ Fiercely.

¹² Deceiver ; French, "trompeur."

¹³ Archimago.

They both nigh were, and each bade other fly :
Both fled at once, nor ever back returned eye ;
Till that they come unto a forest green,
In which they shroud themselves from causeless
fear :

Yet fear them follows still, whereso they been :
Each trembling leaf and whistling wind they
hear

As ghastly bug¹ does greatly them afear :
Yet both do strive their fearfulness to feign.²
At last they heard a horn that shrilled clear
Throughout the wood that echo'd again,
And made the forest ring, as it would rive in
twain.

Eft³ through the thick⁴ they heard one rudely
rush ;

With noise whereof he from his lofty steed
Down fell to ground, and crept into a bush,
To hide his coward head from dying dread.⁵
But Trompart stoutly stay'd to taken heed
Of what might hap. Eftsoons there stepp'd forth
A goodly lady clad in hunter's weed,
That seem'd to be a woman of great worth,
And by her stately portance⁶ born of heav'nly
birth.

Her face so fair, as flesh it seem'd not,
But heav'nly portrait of bright angel's hue,
Clear as the sky, withouten blame or blot,
Through goodly mixture of complexions due ;
And in her cheeks the vermeil red did shew
Like roses in a bed of lilies shed,
The which ambrosial odours from them threw,
And gazers' sense with double pleasure fed,
Able to heal the sick and to revive the dead.

In her fair eyes two living lamps did flame,
Kindled above at th' heav'nly Maker's light,
And darted fiery beams out of the same,
So passing persant,⁷ and so wondrous bright,
That quite bereav'd the rash beholder's sight :
In them the blinded god his lustful fire
To kindle oft assay'd, but had no might ;
For, with dread majesty and awful ire,
She broke his wanton darts, and quenched base
desire.⁸

Her ivory forehead, full of bounty brave,
Like a broad table did itself dispread,
For love his lofty triumphs to engrave,
And write the battles of his great godhead :
All good and honour might therein be read ;
For there their dwelling was. And, when she
spake,

Sweet words, like dropping honey, she did shed ;
And 'twixt the pearls and rubies softly brake
A silver sound, that heav'nly music seem'd to
make.

¹ Bugbear.

² Dissemble, conceal.

³ Soon after.

⁴ Thicket.

⁵ Fear of death, or deadly fear.

⁶ Carriage.

⁷ Piercing.

⁸ The portrait of Belphebe, like that of the Faery Queen herself, and of most of Spenser's fair and virtuous ladies, is designed to show forth the praises of the Virgin Queen Elizabeth. See the Introductory Letter to Raleigh, page 306.

⁹ Lovely looks.

¹⁰ Aspect.

¹¹ A tunic, or short robe ; the word has an analogy with "chemise," it is found in the French word "cami-

Upon her eyelids many graces satè,
Under the shadow of her even brows,
Working belgardes⁹ and amorous retrate ;¹⁰
And ev'ry one her with a grace endows,
And ev'ry one with meekness to her bows :
So glorious mirror of celestial grace,
And sov'reign monument of mortal vows,
How shall frail pen describe her heav'nly face,
For fear, through want of skill, her beauty to
disgrace !

So fair, and thousand thousand times more fair ;
She seem'd, when she presented was to sight ;
And was y-clad, for heat of scorching air,
All in a silken camus¹¹ lily white,
Purpled¹² upon with many a folded plight,¹³
Which all above besprinkled was throughout
With golden aiguillettes, that glister'd bright
Like twinkling stars ; and all the skirt about
Was hemm'd with golden fringe [most gor-
geously set out¹⁴].

Below her ham her weed¹⁵ did somewhat train,¹⁶
And her straight legs most bravely were em-
bail'd¹⁷

In gilden buskins of costly cordwain,¹⁸
And barr'd with golden bands, which were
entail'd¹⁹

With curious antics,²⁰ and full fair email'd :²¹
Before, they fasten'd were under her knee
In a rich jewel, and therein entrail'd²²
The ends of all the knots, that none might see
How they within their foldings close enwrap-
p'd be :

Like two fair marble pillars they were seen,
Which do the temple of the gods support,
Whom all the people deck with garlands green,
And honour in their festival resort ;
Those same with stately grace and princely port
She taught to tread, when she herself would
grace ;

But with the woody nymphs when she did sport,
Or when the flying libbard²³ she did chase,
She could them nimbly move, and after fly apace.

And in her hand a sharp boar-spear she held,
And at her back a bow and quiver gay,
Stuff'd with steel-headed darts, wherewith she
quell'd

The salvage beasts in her victorious play ;
Knit with a golden baldric²⁴ which forelay
Athwart her snowy breast, and did divide
Her daintypaps ; which, like young fruit in May,
Now little gan to swell, and, being tied,
Through her thin weed their places only signified.

Her yellow locks, crisp'd like golden wire,
About her shoulders weren loosely shed,

sade," and in the same language "camisole" means a
short night-robe.

¹² Embroidered.

¹³ Plait.

¹⁴ This is the first instance in the "Faerie Queen" of a hemistich, or broken line ; the words in brackets were suggested by a contemporary of Spenser's, to complete the line.

¹⁵ Dress.

¹⁶ Hang.

¹⁷ Enclosed.

¹⁸ Cordovan leather.

¹⁹ Engraved, ornamented in intaglio.

²⁰ Devices.

²¹ Enamelled ; French, "émailler," to enamel.

²² Twisted, interwoven.

²³ Leopard.

²⁴ Belt.

And, when the wind amongst them did inspire,¹
They wav'd like a pennon wide dispread,
And low behind her back were scatter'd :
And, whether art it were or heedless hap,
As through the flow'ring forest rash she fled,
In her rude hairs sweet flow'rs themselves did
lap,²

And flourishing fresh leaves and blossoms did
enwrap.

Such as Diana by the sandy shore
Of swift Eurotas, or on Cynthus green,
Where all the nymphs have her unware for-
lore,³

Wanders alone with bow and arrows keen,
To seek her game : or as that famous queen⁴
Of Amazons, whom Pyrrhus did destroy,
The day that first of Priam she was seen,
Did show herself in great triumphant joy,
To succour the weak state of sad afflicted Troy.

Heartless Trompart, all dismayed, knew not
whether to fly or hide, until the forest-queen
asked him if he had seen a bleeding hind in
whose haunch she had fixed an arrow. Re-
assured, Trompart, addressing her as "god-
dess," said that he had seen no such beast, and
inquired which of the gods he might her name,
that he might do her worship aright. Ere she
could reply, her eye detected a movement in the
bush where Braggadocio lay ; and she was
about to launch a deadly shaft, when Trom-
part interposed to save his liege lord, who was
of warlike name and wide renowned. Bragga-
docio crawled out of his nest on "caitiff hands
and thighs, and standing stoutly up, his lofty
crest did fiercely shake, and rouse as coming
late from rest."

As fearful fowl, that long in secret cave
For dread of soaring hawk herself hath hid,
Not caring how, her silly life to save,
She her gay painted plumes disorder'd ;
Seeing at last herself from danger rid,
Peeps forth, and soon renews her native pride ;
She gins her feathers foul disfigur'd
Proudly to prune, and set on every side ;
She shakes off shame, nor thinks how erst⁵ she
did her hide.

So Braggadocio, when her goodly visage he
beheld, began to vaunt himself, but was daunted
by the sight of her arms. She saluted him
graciously as a knight in pursuit of honour ; he
declared that in that pursuit he had spent all
his youthly days, "endeavouring his dreaded
name to raise above the moon ;" then he
asked why she ranged the wild forest, where no
pleasure is, instead of frequenting the Court ;
for "the wood is fit for beasts, the Court is fit
for thee."

"Whoso in pomp of proud estate," quoth she,
"Does swim, and bathes himself in courtly bliss,
Does waste his days in dark obscurity,

¹ Breathe.

² Entwine.

³ Abandoned.

⁴ Penthesilea ; who came to succour King Priam,
towards the close of the siege of Troy, and was

And in oblivion ever buried is :
Where ease abounds, 'tis eath⁶ to do amiss :
But who his limbs with labours, and his mind
Behaves⁷ with cares, cannot so easy miss.⁸
Abroad in arms, at home in studious kind,
Who seeks with painful toil, shall Honour
soonest find :

"In woods, in waves, in wars, she wents to
dwell,

And will be found with peril and with pain ;
Nor can the man that moulds in idle cell
Unto her happy mansion attain :
Before her gate High God did Sweet ordain,
And wakeful Watches, ever to abide :
But easy is the way and passage plain
To Pleasure's palace : it may soon be spied,
And day and night her doors to all stand open
wide."

But ere she could proceed, Braggadocio,
carried away by her sweet words and her beauty,
"gan burn in filthy lust," and leaped forward
to embrace her ; she started back, bent against
him her bright javelin, and, turning, fled apace.
"The peasant" was amazed and grieved at her
flight ; but he feared the unknown wood, and the
lady's wrath. Trompart advised that she should
be let pass at will, for who could tell but that
she was some power celestial. Braggadocio
admits that he thought no less "when first he
heard her horn sound with such ghastliness."

"For from my mother's womb this grace I have
Me given by eternal destiny,
That earthly thing may not my courage brave
Dismay with fear, or cause one foot to fly,
But either hellish fiends, or pow'rs on high :
Which was the cause, when erst⁵ that horn I
heard,

Weening it had been thunder in the sky,
I hid myself from it, as one afar'd ;
But, when I other knew, myself I boldly rear'd.

"But now, for fear of worse that may betide,
Let us soon hence depart." They soon agree :
So to his steed he got, and gan to ride
As one unfit therefor, that all might see
He had not train'd been in chivalry.
Which well that valiant courser did discern ;
For he despis'd to tread in due degree,
But chaf'd and foam'd with courage fierce and
stern,
And to be eas'd of that base burden still did
yearn.

CANTO IV.

*Guyon does Furor bind in chains,
And stops Occasion :
Delivers Phaon, and therefore
By Strife is call'd upon.*

In brave pursuit of honourable deed
There is I know not what great difference
slain—not by Pyrrhus, however, as Spenser says, but
—by Achilles.
⁵ Lately. ⁶ It is easy.
⁷ Occupies. ⁸ Err.

Between the vulgar and the noble seed,
Which unto things of valorous pretence
Seems to be borne by native influence ;
As feats of arms ; and love to entertain :
But chiefly skill to ride seems a science
Proper to gentle blood : some others feign
To manage steeds, as did this vaunter ; but in
vain.

Meantime the steed's rightful owner fared on
foot with the Palmer—"his most trusty guide,
who suffer'd not his wandering feet to alide"—
till he beheld from far "some troublous uproar
or contentious fray," and drawing near saw a
madman, or one that feigned to be mad, drag-
ging by the hair along the ground a handsome
stripling, whom he beat savagely and gored with
many a wound.

And him behind a wicked hag did stalk,
In ragged robes and filthy disarray ;
Her other leg¹ was lame, that she n'ot² walk,
But on a staff her feeble steps did stay :
Her locks, that loathly were and hoary gray,
Grew all afore, and loosely hung unroll'd ;
But all behind was bald, and worn away,
That none thereof could ever taken hold ;
And eke her face ill-favour'd, full of wrinkles old.

And, ever as she went, her tongue did walk
In foul reproach and terms of vile despite,
Provoking him, by her outrageous talk,
To heap more vengeance on that wretched wight :
Sometimes she raught³ him stones, wherewith
to smite ;
Sometimes her staff, though it her one leg were,
Withouten which she could not go upright ;
Nor any evil means she did forbear,
That might him move to wrath, and indignation
rear.⁴

Guyon drew near, thrust away the hag, and
laid his mighty hands on the madman ; who at
once turned his beastly brutal rage against the
Knight, "and smote, and bit, and kicked, and
scratched, and rent," unknowing in his fury
what he did. He was a man of great strength,
if he could have guided it aright ; but in his
passion he was wont to strike wide, and often hurt
himself unawares ; he "as a blindfold bull, at
random fares, and where he hits naught knows,
and whom he hurts naught cares." Guyon,
trying to overthrow him, overthrew himself un-
awares, and lay low on the ground ; on which
the villain and the hag united their forces to
kill him. But, with a great effort, the Knight
regained his feet, and drew his sword.

Which when the Palmer saw, he loudly cried,
"Not so, O Guyon, never think that so
That monster can be master'd or destroy'd :
He is not, ah ! he is not such a foe
As steel can wound, or strength can overthrow.
That same is Furor, curs'd cruel wight,
That unto knighthood works much shame and
woe ;

¹ Left leg.
² Reached.
³ Manage.

⁴ Could not.
⁵ Raise, excite.

And that same hag, his aged mother, hight
Occasion ; the root of all wrath and despite.

"With her, whose will raging Furor tame,
Must first begin, and well her *amenage* :⁵
First her restrain from her reproachful blame
And evil means, with which she doth enrage
Her frantic son, and kindles his courage ;
Then, when she is withdrawn or strong withstood,
'Tis eath⁶ his idle fury to assuage,
And calm the tempest of his passion wood :⁷
The banks are overflown when stopp'd is the
flood."

Guyon, seizing Occasion "by the hoar locks
that hung before her eyes," threw her to the
ground ; but she continued her railings and in-
citements to her son, till an iron lock was
fastened firm and strong on her ungracious
tongue. Even then she made signs to him with
her crooked hands, and only when she had been
tied hand and foot to a stake did Furor fly.
Guyon soon overtook him, and, after a stout
wrestle, in which Furor showed sadly impaired
power, he was overcome and bound.

With hundred iron chains he did him bind,
And hundred knots, that did him sore constrain :
Yet his great iron teeth he still did grind
And grimly gnash, threat'ning revenge in vain :
His burning eyne, which bloody streaks did stain,
Star'd full wide, and threw forth sparks of fire ;
And, more for rank despite than for great pain,
Shak'd his long locks, colour'd like copper wire,
And bit his tawny beard to show his raging ire.

Guyon now raised and restored the wretched
squire, inquiring how he fell into such a sorry
plight. He told the following doleful tale :

"It was a faithless squire, that was the source
Of all my sorrow and of these sad tears,
With whom from tender dug of common nurse
At once I was upbrought ; and eft,⁸ when years
More ripe us reason lent to choose our peers,
Ourselves in league of vow'd love we knit ;
In which we long time, without jealous fears
Or faulty thoughts, continu'd as was fit ;
And, for my part I vow, dissembled not a whit.

"It was my fortune, common to that age,
To love a lady fair of great degree,
The which was born of noble parentage,
And set in highest seat of dignity,
Yet seem'd no less to love than lov'd to be ;
Long I her serv'd, and found her faithful still,
Nor ever thing could cause us disagree ;
Love, that two hearts makes one, makes eke
one will :

Each strove to please, and other's pleasure to
fulfil.

"My friend, hight Philemon, I did partake⁹
Of all my love and all my privy ;¹⁰
Who greatly joyous seem'd for my sake,
And gracious to that lady, as to me ;
Nor ever wight, that might so welcome be

⁶ Easy.
⁸ Afterwards.
¹⁰ Secret.

⁷ Mad.
⁹ Make the confidant.

As he to her, withouten blot or blame ;
Nor ever thing that she could think or see,
But unto him she would impart the same :
O wretched man, that would abuse so gentle
dame !

"At last such grace I found, and means I
wrought,
That I that lady to my spouse had won ;
Accord of friends, consent of parents sought,
Affiance made, my happiness begun,
There wanted naught but few rites to be done,
Which marriage make : that day too far did
seem !
Most joyous man, on whom the shining sun
Did show his face, myself I did esteem,
And that my falsè friend did no less joyous
deem.

"But, ere that wishèd day his beam disclos'd,
He, either envying my toward good,¹
Or of himself to treason ill dispos'd,
One day unto me came in friendly mood,
And told, for secret, how he understood
That lady, whom I had to me assign'd,
Had both distain'd her honourable blood,
And eke the faith which she to me did bind ;
And therefore wish'd me stay, till I more truth
should find.

"The gnawing anguish, and sharp jealousy,
Which his sad speech infixèd in my breast,
Rankled so sore, and fester'd inwardly,
That my engrievèd mind could find no rest,
Till that the truth thereof I did out wrest ;
And him besought, by that same sacred band
Betwixt us both, to counsel me the best :
He then, with solemn oath and plighted hand,
Assur'd ere long the truth to let me understand.

"Ere long with like again he borded² me,
Saying, he now had boulded³ all the flour,
And that it was a groom of base degree
Which of my love was partner paramour :
Who usèd in a darksome inner bow'r
Her oft to meet : which better to approve,
He promisèd to bring me at that hour,
When I should see that would me nearer move,⁴
And drive me to withdraw my blind abusèd love.

"This graceless man, for furtherance of his guile,
Did court the handmaid of my lady dear,
Who, glad t' embosom⁵ his affection vile,
Did all she might more pleasing to appear.
One day, to work her to his will more near,
He woo'd her thus ; 'Pryenè (so she hight),
What great despite doth fortune to thee bear,
Thus lowly to abase thy beauty bright,
That it should not deface all others' lesser light ?

"But if she had her least help to thee lent,
T' adorn thy form according thy desert,⁶
Their blazing pride thou wouldest soon have
blent,⁷

And stain'd their praises with thy least good part ;

¹ My happiness near at hand.

² Addressed ; French, "aborder," to accost.

³ Sifted. See note 12, page 169.

⁴ Affect more deeply.

⁵ Admit to her heart.

⁶ According to thy desert.

⁷ Obacured.

Nor should fair Claribell' with all her art,
Though she thy lady be, approach thee near :
For proof thereof, this ev'ning, as thou art,
Array thyself in her most gorgeous gear,
That I may more delight in thy embracement
dear.'

"The maiden, proud through praise, and mad
through love,
Him hearken'd to, and soon herself array'd ;
The while to me the traitor did remove
His crafty engine ; and, as he had said,
Me leading, in a secret corner laid,
The sad spectator of my tragedy :
Where left, he went, and his own false part
play'd,

Disguisèd like that groom of base degree,
Whom he had feign'd th' abuser of my love to be.

"Eftsoons he came unto th' appointed place,
And with him brought Pryenè, rich array'd
In Claribella's clothes : her proper face
I not discernèd in that darksome shade,
But ween'd⁸ it was my love with whom he play'd.
Ah God ! what horror and tormenting grief
My heart, my hands, mine eyes, and all assay'd !
Me liefer⁹ were ten thousand deathes' prefe¹⁰
Than wound of jealous worm, and shame of
such reпре.¹¹

"I home returning, fraught with foul despite,
And chawing¹² vengeance all the way I went,
Soon as my loathèd love appear'd in sight,
With wrathful hand I slew her innocent ;
That after soon I dearly did lament :
For when the cause of that outrageous deed,
Demanded, I made plain and evident,
Her faulty handmaid, which that bale¹³ did
breed,

Confess'd how Phllemon her wrought to change
her weed.

"Which when I heard, with horrible affright
And hellish fury all enrag'd, I sought
Upon myself that vengeable despite
To punish : yet it better first I thought
To wreak my wrath on him, that first it wrought :
To Phllemon, false faitour¹⁴ Phllemon,
I cast¹⁵ to pay that I so dearly bought :
Of deadly drugs I gave him drink anon,
And wash'd away his guilt with guilty potion.

"Thus heaping crime on crime, and grief on
grief, to loss of love adjoining loss of friend,"
he then tried to kill Pryenè ; she fled, and he pur-
sued. "Fear gave her wings, and rage enforced
my flight ;" but Furor pursued and seized him,
and, with his mother, "betwixt them both they
have me done to die." Guyon assured the
squire that all his hurts might soon through
temperance be eased ; but

Then gan the Palmer thus ; "Most wretched
man,

That to Affections¹⁶ does the bridle lend !

⁸ Supposed.

⁹ Preferable.

¹⁰ The test or suffering of ten thousand deaths.

¹¹ Disgrace.

¹² Brooding.

¹³ Misery.

¹⁴ Deceiver.

¹⁵ Resolved, sought means.

¹⁶ The passions.

In their beginning they are weak and wan,
But soon through sufferance grow to fearful end:
While they are weak, betimes with them contend;

For, when they once to perfect strength do grow,

Strong wars they make, and cruel battery bend
'Gainst fort of Reason, it to overthrow:

Wrath, Jealousy, Grief, Love, this squire have laid thus low.

"Wrath, Jealousy, Grief, Love, do thus expel:
Wrath is a fire; and Jealousy a weed;
Grief is a flood; and Love a monster fell;
The fire of sparks, the weed of little seed,
The flood of drops, the monster filth did breed:
But sparks, seed, drops, and filth, do thus delay;¹

The sparks soon quench, the springing seed out-weed,

The drops dry up, and filth wipe clean away:
So shall Wrath, Jealousy, Grief, Love, die and decay."

Just as the squire has informed Guyon that his name is Phaon, and that he is sprung from "famous Coradin," they spy far off a varlet running towards them hastily, covered with dust and sweat, panting, breathless, and hot. Behind his back he bears a brazen shield, on which is painted "a flaming fire in midst of bloody field," with the motto writ round about the wreath, "Burnt I do burn;" and in his hand are two swift darts, deadly sharp and dipped "in poison and in blood of malice and despite." He boldly warns Guyon to "abandon this forestalled place" at once, or bide the chance at his own jeopardy. Scornfully but mildly the Knight declares that the place is his by right, and inquires whom he has to fear. The "varlet" then vaunts the might of his lord, whose name is Pyrochles,² the brother of Cymochles;³

—"Both which are
The sons of old Acrates and Despite;
Acrates, son of Phlegethon and Jar;
Phlegethon, son of Erebus and Night;
But Erebus son of Eternity is right."

Proceeding from immortal race, mortal hands may not withstand his might; and "all in blood and spoil is his delight." The speaker, Atin,⁴ "his in wrong and right," is the maker of matter for him to work upon, and his instigator to strife and cruel fight. His lord has sent him in haste

"To seek Occasion, whereso she be:
For he is all dispos'd to bloody fight,
And breathes out wrath and heinous cruelty;
Hard is his hap, that first falls in his jeopardy."

"Mad man," said then the Palmer, "that does seek

¹ Hinder of their effect.

² One who rages as a flame; From Greek *πυρ*, fire, and *οχλεω*, I am troubled or turbulent—the idea being taken from the riot and uproar caused by a crowd of people, *οχλος*.

Occasion to wrath, and cause of strife;
She comes unsought, and shunn'd follows eke.
Happy! who can abstain, when Rancour rife
Kindles Revenge, and threats his rusty knife:
Woe never wants, where every cause is caught;
And rash Occasion makes unquiet life!"

"Then lo! where bound she sits, whom thou hast sought,"

Said Guyon; "let that message to thy lord be brought."

The squire of Pyrochles, waxing wondrous wroth, sarcastically complimented Guyon on the great glory and gay spoil won by his combat with "silly weak old woman," and threatened that Pyrochles should with his blood abolish so reproachful blot. Then, having fruitlessly aimed one of his darts at the Knight, "he fled away, and might nowhere be seen."

CANTO V.

*Pyrochles does with Guyon fight,
And Furor's chain unties,
Who him sore wounds: while Atin to
Cymochles for aid flies.*

WHOEVER doth to Temperance apply
His steadfast life, and all his actions frame,
Trust me, shall find no greater enemy,
Than stubborn Perturbation, to the same;
To which right well the wise do give that name;
For it the goodly peace of stay'd⁵ minds
Does overthrow, and troublous war proclaim:
His own woe's author, whose bound it finds,
As did Pyrochles, and it wilfully unbinds.

Soon Guyon saw pricking fast over the plain a knight in bright armour, that shone like the sun on the trembling wave; his steed was bloody red, and foamed angrily under the spur. Without greeting or exchange of words, Pyrochles—for it was he—rushed upon Guyon in a cloud of dust, with his spear in rest. The Knight, being on foot, lightly shunned the stroke, and, passing by, smote at his assailant so fiercely, that the sword, glancing from Pyrochles' shield, severed the horse's head from the body, and thus reduced the contest to equal terms. Sore bruised, Pyrochles rose from the ground, overwhelming Guyon with loud abuse, and struck at him with his flaming sword so fiercely, that the stroke shore away "the upper marge of his sev'nfolded shield," and laid open his helmet. A bitter combat ensued, in which Guyon was wary wise and cool, waiting the advantage which his furious foe was sure to give; and often he made feints, to provoke Pyrochles to new rashness in his conduct of the battle.

³ One who rages as a billow; from Greek *κυμα*, a billow, and *οχλεω*.

⁴ From *Ατη*, Destiny, Necessity; personified as a female goddess by the Greeks, though Spenser has changed the sex, and altered the word to a more masculine form.

⁵ Steadfast.

Like as a lion, whose imperial pow'r
A proud rebellious unicorn defies,
T' avoid the rash assault and wrathful stowre¹
Of his fierce foe, him to a tree applies,
And when him running in full course he spies,
He slips aside; the while that furious beast
His precious horn, sought of his enemies,
Strikes in the stock,² nor thence can be releast,
But to the mighty victor yields a bounteous feast.

Thus did the Knight often foil his opponent,
till at last, assailing him with fresh onset, he
made him stoop perforce unto his knee, and
soon, following up his victory, struck him to
the ground, and obliged him to call for mercy.
Sir Guyon, "tempering his passion with advise-
ment slow," stayed his hand; "for the equal
die of war he well did know;" and bade Pyrochles
live to repent his "hasty wrath and heedless
hazardry." The vanquished warrior rose with
grim look, grinding his grated teeth for great
disdain, and shook for grief his long sandy locks;
yet finding in himself some comfort that he
had been mastered by such a noble knight, at
whose generosity he marvelled even more than
at his might. Guyon consoled him by the re-
flection that the greatest conqueror sometimes
has the worse; that "loss is no shame, nor to
be less than foe; but to be lesser than himself
doth mar both loser's lot, and victor's praise
also; vain others overthrows who self doth
overthrow."

"Fly, O Pyrochles, fly the dreadful war
That in thyself thy lesser parts³ do move:
Outrageous Anger, and woe-working Jar,
Direful Impatience, and heart-murd'ring Love:
Those, those thy foes, those warriors, far remove,
Which thee to endless bale⁴ captiv'd lead.
But, since in might thou didst my mercy prove,
Of courtesy to me the cause aread⁵
That thee against me drew with so impetuous
dread."

Pyrochles replied that it had been complained
to him that Guyon had done great wrong to an
aged woman, poor and bare; and exhorted him
to set Occasion and her son at liberty. Guyon
warned him that their freedom should turn to
his greatest scath; but granted his request.
"Soon as Occasion felt herself untied," she
began to defy both the knights—the one because
he won, the other because he was won; and,
whenever "Furor was enlarged, she sought
to kindle his quench'd fire, and thousand causes
wrought." She so inflamed Furor, that he
would fight with Pyrochles, his deliverer, "be-
cause he had not well maintain'd his right,"
but had yielded to Sir Guyon. Guyon, stand-
ing by to watch their uncouth strife, saw them
"both together fierce engrasped;" while Occa-
sion attempted, but in vain, to provoke him to
a new conflict with Pyrochles. The longer the
battle lasted, the more Furor's rage increased,

till he had sore wounded and disfigured his
adversary; while Occasion armed her son with
a firebrand, "which she in Stygian Lake, ay
burning bright, had kindled." Then Furor
waxed irresistibly fierce and strong; he threw
Pyrochles to the ground, dragging his comely
corse through dirt and mire, till he had to cry
to Sir Guyon for help. The Knight would fain
have interposed; but the Palmer, by his grave
restraint, stayed him from vainly pitying a man
who sought his sorrow through wilfulness, by
releasing again his fettered foe. Guyon obeyed
the counsel, and pursued his journey; but Atin,
Pyrochles' varlet, had fled, after seeing his
master under Guyon's foot, to bear tidings of
his brother's death to Cymochles.

He was a man of rare redoubted might,
Famous throughout the world for warlike praise,
And glorious spoils, purchas'd in perilous fight:
Full many doughty knights he in his days
Had done to death, subdued in equal frays;
Whose carcasses, for terror of his name,
Of fowls and beasts he made the piteous preys,
And hung their conquer'd arms for more defame⁶
On gallows-trees, in honour of his dearest dame.

His dearest dame is that enchanteress,
The vile Acrasia, that with vain delights,
And idle pleasures, in her Bower of Bliss
Does charm her lovers, and the feeble sprites
Can call out of the bodies of frail wights;
Whom then she does transform to monstrous
hues,⁷

And horribly misshapes with ugly sights,
Captiv'd eternally in iron mews.⁸
And darksome dens, where Titan⁹ his face never
shews.

There Atin found Cymochles sojourning,
To serve his leman's¹⁰ love: for he by kind¹¹
Was given all to lust and loose living,
Whenever his fierce hands he free might find:
And now he has pour'd out his idle mind
In dainty délicés¹² and lavish joys,
Having his warlike weapons cast behind,
And flows in pleasures and vain pleasing toys,
Mingled amongst loose ladies and lascivious boys.

And over him Art, striving to compare
With Nature, did an arbour green dispread,
Fram'd of wanton ivy, flowering fair,
Through which the fragrant eglantine did spread
His prickling arms, entrail'd¹³ with roses red,
Which dainty odours round about him threw:
And all within with flowers was garnish'd,
That, when mild Zephyrus amongst them blew,
Did breathe out bounteous smells, and painted
colours shew.

And fast beside there trickled softly down
A gentle stream, whose murmuring wave did play
Amongst the pumy¹⁴ stones, and made a soun'
To lull him soft asleep that by it lay:
The weary traveller, wandering that way,

¹ Shock.² Lower parts or qualities of the nature.³ Misery.⁴ Disgrace.⁵ Trunk.⁶ Declare.⁷ Shapes, appearances.⁸ Prisons, cages.⁹ Mistress's.¹⁰ Delights.¹¹ Porous.¹² The Sun.¹³ Nature.¹⁴ Intertwined.

Therein did often quench his thirsty heat,
And then by it his weary limbs display
(While creeping slumber made him to forget
His former pain), and wip'd away his toilsome
sweat.

And on the other side a pleasant grove
Was shot up high, full of the stately tree¹
That dedicated is t' Olympic Jove,
And to his son Alcides, when as he
In Nemea gain'd goodly victory :
Therein the merry birds of ev'ry sort
Chanted aloud their cheerful harmony,
And made amongst themselves a sweet consórt,
That quicken'd the dull sprite with musical
comfort.

There he him found² all carelessly display'd
In secret shadow from the sunny ray,
On a sweet bed of lilies softly laid,
Amidst a flock of damsels fresh and gay,
That round about him dissolute did play
Their wanton follies and light merriments ;
Ev'ry of which did loosely disarray
Her upper parts of meet habiliments,
And show'd them naked, deck'd with many or-
naments.

And ev'ry of them strove with most delights
Him to aggrate,³ and greatest pleasures show :
Some fram'd fair looks, glancing like ev'ning
lights ;

Others sweet words, dropping like honey-dew ;
Some bathed kisses, and did soft embrue
The sugar'd liquor through his melting lips :
One boasts her beauty, and does yield to view
Her dainty limbs above her tender hips ;
Another her outboasts, and all for trial strips.

He, like an adder lurking in the weeds,
His wand'ring thought in deep desire does steep,
And his frail eye with spoil of beauty feeds :
Sometimes he falsely feigns himself to sleep,
While through their lids his wanton eyes do
peep

To steal a snatch of amorous conceit,
Whereby close⁴ fire into his heart does creep :
So he them deceives, deceiv'd in his deceit,
Made drunk with drugs of dear voluptuous
receipt.

Atin, when he spied Cymochles "thus in still
waves of deep delight to wade," fiercely ap-
proached, and reviled him for his sloth and
neglect of arms. "Up, up, thou womanish
weak wight," he cried, and bade him fly to the
help of Pyrochles ; pricking him at the same
time with his sharp-pointed dart. Suddenly
Cymochles awoke out of his delightful dream,
and, uprising "as one affright with hellish
fiends, or Furies' mad uproar," inflamed with
fell despite, he calls for his arms.

They be y-brought ; he quickly does him dight,⁵
And, lightly mounted, passeth on his way ;
Nor ladies' loves, nor sweet entreaties, might

Appease his heat, or hasty passage stay ;
For he has vow'd to be aveng'd that day
(That day itself him seem'd all too long)
On him, that did Pyrochles dear dismay :⁶
So proudly pricketh on his courser strong,
And Atin ay him pricks with spurs of shame
and wrong.

CANTO VI.

*Guyon is of immodest Mirth
Led into loose desire ;
Fights with Cymochles, while his bro-
ther burns in furious fire.*

A HARDER lesson to learn continence
In joyous pleasure than in grievous pain :
For sweetness doth allure the weaker sense
So strongly, that unneth⁷ it can refrain
From that which feeble nature covets fain :
But grief and wrath, that be her enemies
And foes of life, she better can restrain :
Yet Virtue vaunts in both her victories ;
And Guyon in them all shows goodly masteries.⁸

Whom bold Cymochles travelling to find,
With cruel purpose bent to wreak on him
The wrath which Atin kindled in his mind,
Came to a river, by whose utmost brim
Waiting to pass, he saw where as did swim
Along the shore, as swift as glance of eye,
A little gondelay,⁹ bedeck'd trim
With boughs and arbours woven cunningly,
That like a little forest seem'd outwardly.

And therein sat a lady fresh and fair,
Making sweet solace to herself alone :
Sometimes she sung as loud as lark in air,
Sometimes she laugh'd, that nigh her breath
was gone ;

Yet was there not with her else any one,
That to her might move cause of merriment :
Matter of mirth enough, though there were
none,

She could devise ; and thousand ways invent
To feed her foolish humour and vain jolliment.¹⁰

Which when, far off, Cymochles heard and saw,
He loudly call'd to such as were aboard,
The little bark unto the shore to draw,
And him to ferry over that deep ford.
The merry mariner unto his word
Soon hearken'd, and her painted boat straight-
way

Turn'd to the shore, where that same warlike
lord

She in receiv'd ; but Atin by no way
She would admit, although the Knight her
much did pray.

Eftsoons her shallow ship away did slide,
More swift than swallow shears the liquid sky,
Withouten oar or pilot it to guide,

¹ The oak, sacred to Jove ; and the poplar, to Her-
cules.

² Gratify.

³ Atin found Cymochles.

⁴ Secret.

⁵ Array himself.

⁶ Superiority.

⁷ Scarcely.

⁸ Subdue.

⁹ Gondola ; light swift boat.

¹⁰ Jollity.

Or wing'd canvas with the wind to fly :
Only she turn'd a pin, and by and by
It cut away upon the yielding wave
(Nor car'd she her course for to apply ¹),
For it was taught the way which she would have,
And both from rocks and flats itself could wisely
save.

And all the way the wanton damsel found
New mirth her passenger to entertain ;
For she in pleasant purpose ² did abound,
And greatly joy'd merry tales to feign,³
Of which a store-house did with her remain ;
Yet seem'd, nothing well they her became :
For all her words she drown'd with laughter
vain,

And wanted grace in uttering of the same,
That turn'd all her pleasance to a scoffing game.

And other whiles vain toys she would devise,
As her fantastic wit did most delight :
Sometimes her head she fondly would aguise ⁴
With gaudy garlands, or fresh flow'rets dight
About her neck, or rings of rushes plight :⁵
Sometimes, to do ⁶ him laugh, she would assay
To laugh at shaking of the leaves light,
Or to behold the water work and play
About her little frigate, therein making way.

Wondrously well pleased with "her light
behaviour and loose dalliance," the knight for-
got all about his revenge in the pleasure of the
moment: "so easy is t' appease the stormy
wind of malice in the calm of pleasant woman-
kind." In answer to his inquiry, she told him
that her name was Phœdria,⁷ and that she was,
as well as he, a servant of Acrasia.

"In this wide inland sea, that hight by name
The Idle Lake, my wand'ring ship I row,
That knows her port, and thither sails by aim,
Nor care nor fear I how the wind do blow,
Or whether swift I wend or whether slow :
Both slow and swift alike do serve my turn :
Nor swelling Neptune nor loud-thund'ring Jove
Can change my cheer,⁸ or make me ever mourn :
My little boat can safely pass this perilous
bourn."⁹

While thus she talk'd, and while thus she
toy'd,

They were far past the passage which he spake,¹⁰
And come unto an island waste and void,¹¹
That floated in the midst of that great lake ;
There her small gondelay her port did make,
And that gay pair, issuing on the shore,
Disburden'd her : their way they forward take
Into the land that lay them fair before,
Whose pleasance she him show'd, and plentiful
great store.

It was a chosen plot of fertile land,
Amongst wide waves set, like a little nest,
As if it had by Nature's cunning hand

¹ Steer towards any particular point.

² Talk.

⁴ Dress, adorn.

⁶ Make.

⁷ From the Greek *φαιδρος*, joyous, jocund, or merry.

⁸ Countenance, demeanour. ⁹ Stream.

³ Invent, fancy.

⁵ Plaited.

Been choicely pick'd out from all the rest,
And laid forth for ensample of the best :
No dainty flow'r or herb that grows on ground,
No arboret ¹² with painted blossoms drest
And smelling sweet, but there it might be found
To bud out fair, and her sweet smells throw all
around.

No tree, whose branches did not bravely spring ;
No branch, whereon a fine bird did not sit ;
No bird, but did her shrill notes sweetly sing ;
No song, but did contain a lovely ditt.¹³
Trees, branches, birds, and songs, were fram'd fit
For to allure frail mind to careless ease.
Careless the man soon wax'd, and his weak wit
Was overcome of thing that did him please :
So pleas'd did his wrathful purpose fair appease.

Thus when she had his eyes and senses fed
With false delights, and fill'd with pleasures
vain,

Into a shady dale she soft him led,
And laid him down upon a grassy plain ;
And her sweet self without dread or disdain
She set beside, laying his head disarm'd
In her loose lap, it softly to sustain,
Where soon he slumber'd fearing not be harm'd :
The while with a love lay she thus him sweetly
charm'd :

"Behold, O man ! that toilsome pains dost take,
The flowers, the fields, and all that pleasant
grows,
How they themselves do thine ensample make,
While nothing envious Nature them forth
throws

Out of her fruitful lap ; how, no man knows,
They spring, they bud, they blossom fresh and
fair,
And deck the world with their rich pompous
shows ;
Yet no man for them taketh pains or care,
Yet no man to them can his careful pains com-
pare.

"The lily, lady of the flow'ring field,
The flow'r-de-luce,¹⁴ her lovely paramour,
Bid thee to them thy fruitless labours yield,
And soon leave off this toilsome weary stowre :¹⁵
Lo ! lo ! how brave she decks her bounteous
bow'r,

With silken curtains and gold coverlets,
Therein to shroud her sumptuous belamour !¹⁶
Yet neither spins nor cards, nor cares nor frets,
But to her mother Nature all her care she lets.¹⁷

"Why then dost thou, O man ! that of them all
Art lord, and eke of Nature sovereign,
Wilfully make thyself a wretched thrall,
And waste thy joyous hours in needless pain,
Seeking for danger and adventures vain ?
What boots it all to have and nothing use ?
Who shall him rue ¹⁸ that, swimming in the main,

¹⁰ Bespoke, desired.

¹¹ Uninhabited, empty.

¹² Shrub, or small tree.

¹³ Ditty, theme, of love.

¹⁴ The iris ; French, "fleur-de-lis."

¹⁵ Conflict.

¹⁶ Lover.

¹⁷ Leaves.

¹⁸ Pity.

Will die for thirst, and water doth refuse?
Refuse such fruitless toil, and present pleasures
choose."

Having lulled him fast asleep, and bathed his eyes in liquors strong, that he might not soon awake, she clove again in her boat "the slothful wave of that great greasy lake." On the farther shore she encountered Guyon, seeking for passage; she took the Knight aboard, but neither "for price nor prayers" would she receive the Palmer Reason; and Guyon, though all reluctant to leave him, was hurried off in the fleet bark, over "the dull billows thick as troubled mire, whom neither wind out of their seat could force, nor timely tides did drive out of their sluggish source." By the way "her merry fit she freshly gan to rear;" but the Knight, while partaking her honest mirth and pleasance, so soon as he saw "her pass the bounds of honest merrimake, her dalliance he despised and follies did forsake." Landing, Guyon knew that he had got astray, and upbraided the lady for misguiding him when he had trusted her.

"Fair Sir," quoth she, "be not displeas'd at all;
Who fares on sea may not command his way,
Nor wind and weather at his pleasure call;
The sea is wide, and easy for to stray;
The wind unstable, and doth never stay.
But here a while ye may in safety rest,
Till season serve new passage to assay:
Better safe port than be in seas distrest."
Therewith she laugh'd, and did her earnest end
in jest.

But he, half discontent, must nathëless
Himself appease, and issued forth on shore:
The joys whereof, and happy fruitfulness,
Such as he saw, she gan him lay before,
And all, though pleasant, yet she made much
more.

The fields did laugh, the flow'rs did freshly
spring,
The trees did bud, and early blossoms bore;
And all the quire of birds did sweetly sing,
And told that garden's pleasures in their carol-
ling.

And she, more sweet than any bird on bough,
Would oftentimes amongst them bear a part,
And strive to pass¹ (as she could well enow)
Their native music by her skilful art:
So did she all, that might his constant heart
Withdraw from thought of warlike enterprise,
And drown in dissolute delights apart,
Where noise of arms, or view of martial guise,
Might not revive desire of knightly exercise.

But Guyon "was wise, and wary of her will, and ever held his hand upon his heart;" though he did not rudely reject the lady's attempts to please, yet he "ever her desir'd to depart;" while she, renewing her disports, "ever bade him stay till time the tide renewed." Meantime Cymochles woke out of his idle dream,

¹ Surpass.

² Make men die in misery.

and, stirred with shame extreme for his sloth in pursuit of vengeance, marched down to the strand. Meeting Sir Guyon with Phædria, he instantly challenged him to "let be that lady debonair," and prepare for battle. The knights waged a desperate conflict, until Guyon's angry blade cleft his opponent's crest in twain, and bared all his head to the bone—"wherewith astonish'd still he stood as senseless stone." Phædria, seizing the occasion, ran between them, piteously appealing for peace, "if ever love of lady did impierce their iron breasts, or pity could find place." She reproached herself as "the author of this heinous deed;" and continued—

"But, if for me ye fight, or me will serve,
Not this rude kind of battle, nor these arms
Are meet, the which do men in bale to sterve,²
And doleful sorrow heap with deadly harms:
Such cruel game my scarmoges³ disarms.
Another war, and other weapons, I
Do love, where love does give his sweet alarms
Without bloodshéd, and where the enemy
Does yield unto his foe a pleasant victory.

"Debateful strife, and cruel enmity,
The famous name of knighthood foully shend;⁴
But lovely peace, and gentle amity,
And in amours the passing hours to spend,
The mighty martial hands do most commend;
Of love they ever greater glory bore
Than of their arms: Mars is Cupido's friend,
And is for Venus' loves renown'd more
Than all his wars and spoils, the which he did
of yore."

"Therewith she sweetly smil'd;" and—"such power have pleasing words! such is the might of courteous clemency in gentle heart!"—the knights ceased their strife. Guyon anew besought the damsel to let him depart; and now he found her "no less glad than he desirous was" of his departure, for she was disquieted when she saw him "a foe of folly and immodest toy," caring nothing for her joy and vain delight. She transported him to the farther strand, and there he spied Atin standing where Cymochles had left him. He assailed Guyon with bitter reviling, "as shepherd's cur, that in dark evening's shade hath trac'd out some salvage beast's tread;" but the Knight, "though somewhat mov'd in his mighty heart, yet with strong reason master'd passion frail," and passed unheeding on his way. Atin was left standing on the strand.

Whilst there the varlet stood, he saw from far
An arm'd knight that toward him fast ran;
He ran on foot, as if in luckless war
His fórlorn⁵ steed from him the victor wan:
He seem'd breathless, heartless, faint, and wan;
And all his armour sprinkled was with blood,
And soil'd with dirty gore, that no man can
Discern the hue thereof: he never stood,
But bent his hasty course toward the Idle Flood.

³ Skirmishes; from French "éscarmouche," Italian, "scaramuccia." ⁴ Disgrace. ⁵ Lost.

The varlet saw, when to the flood he came,
How without stop or stay he fiercely leapt,
And deep himself beduck'd in the same,
That in the lake his lofty crest was stept,¹
Nor of his safety seem'd care he kept ;
But with his raging arms he rudely flash'd
The waves about, and all his armour swept,
That all the blood and filth away was wash'd ;
Yet still he beat the water, and the billows
dash'd.

Drawing near, Atin recognised Pyrochles, and
inquired what had befallen. "I burn, I burn,
I burn," he cried aloud ; "oh, how I burn with
implacable fire." "Nor sea of liquor cold, nor
lake of mire"—death alone—could quench his
inly flaming side. Atin urged him not to think
of laying hands on himself ; but, called upon
by his agonised lord to help his last hour, Atin
rushed in to save him. He did not know the
true nature of that sea, whose waves were so
slow and sluggish, "engross'd with mud which
did them foul agrieve," that they bore up every
weighty thing, and let nothing sink to the
bottom.

While thus they struggled in that idle wave,
And strove in vain, the one himself to drown,
The other both from drowning for to save,
Lo ! to that shore one in an ancient gown,
Whose hoary locks great gravity did crown,
Holding in hand a goodly arming sword,
By fortune came, led with the troublous soun' :
Where drench'd deep he found in that dull ford
The careful² servant striving with his raging
lord.

Atin called to Archimago for help—for the
new-comer was the enchanter, with the sword
promised to Braggadocio ; and Pyrochles was
got out, still exclaiming against "that curs'd
man, that cruel fiend of hell," Furor, whose
deadly wounds within his liver swelled till, he
said, "now I ween Jove's dreaded thunder
light does scorch not half so sore, nor damn'd
ghost in flaming Phlegethon does not so felly
roast." Archimago knew at once his grief, and
disarmed him, to search his secret wounds ;
then, with balms, and herbs, and mighty spells,
he speedily restored Pyrochles to health.

CANTO VII.

*Guyon finds Mammon in a delve,³
Sunning his treasure hoar ;
Is by him tempted, and led down
To see his secret store.*

As pilot well expert in perilous wave,
That to a steadfast star his course hath bent,

¹ Steeped.

² Sorrowful.

³ Dell, hollow place.

⁴ Blinded, bedimmed.

⁵ Darkness, dread.

⁶ Firmly fixes.

⁷ Experience.

⁸ Terror-striking aspect.

⁹ Disfigured.

¹⁰ Inlaid or engraved ornament.

¹¹ Fantastic devices.

When foggy mists or cloudy tempests have
The faithful light of that fair lamp y-blent,⁴
And cover'd heaven with hideous dreariment ;⁵
Upon his card and compass firms⁶ his eye,
The masters of his long experiment,⁷
And to them does the steady helm apply,
Bidding his wing'd vessel fairly forward fly :

So, "having lost his trusty Guide," the
Palmer, did Sir Guyon proceed on his way,
through a wide wasteful desert, feeding himself
with comfort "of his own virtues and praise-
worthy deeds."

At last he came unto a gloomy glade,
Cover'd with boughs and shrubs from heaven's
light

Where as he sitting found in secret shade
An uncouth, savage, and uncivil wight,
Of grisly hue⁸ and foul ill-favour'd sight ;
His face with smoke was tann'd, and eyes were
blear'd ;

His head and beard with soot were ill bedight ;⁹
His coal-black hands did seem to have been
sear'd

In smith's fire-spitting forge, and nails like
claws appear'd.

His iron coat, all overgrown with rust,
Was underneath envelop'd with gold ;
Whose glist'ning gloss, darken'd with filthy dust,
Well yet appear'd to have been of old
A work of rich entail¹⁰ and curious mould,
Woven with antics¹¹ and wild imagery :
And in his lap a mass of coin he told,
And turn'd upside down, to feed his eye
And covetous desire with his huge treasury.

And round about him lay on ev'ry side
Great heaps of gold that never could be spent ;
Of which some were rude ore, not purified
Of Mulciber's devouring element ;¹²
Some others were new driven, and distant¹³
Into great ingots and to wedges square ;
Some in round plates withouten monument :¹⁴
But most were stamp'd, and in their metal bare
The antique shapes of Kings and Kaisers¹⁵
strange and rare.

Soon as he Guyon saw, in great affright
And haste he rose, for to remove aside
Those precious hills from stranger's envious
sight ;

And down them pour'd through a hole full
wide

Into the hollow earth, them there to hide :
But Guyon, lightly to him leaping, stay'd
His hand that trembled as one terrified ;
And, though himself were at the sight dismay'd,
Yet him perforce restrain'd, and to him doubt-
ful said ;

"What art thou, man (if man at all thou art),

¹² By fire: Vulcan had the name of "Mulciber," because he softened ("mulcebat") the metal in which he worked ; and the Latin poets used "Mulciber" to signify fire.

¹³ Distended ; beaten out.

¹⁴ Stamp, inscription.

¹⁵ Emperors ; German, "Kaiser," from the Latin, "Caesar."

That here in desert hast thine habitance,
And these rich hills of wealth dost hide apart
From the world's eye, and from her right
usance?"

Thereat, with staring eyes fix'd askance,
In great disdain he answer'd; "Hardy Elf,
That darest view my direful countenance!
I read¹ thee rash and heedless of thyself,
To trouble my still seat and heaps of precious
pelf.

"God of the world and worldlings I me call,
Great Mammon, greatest god below the sky,
That of my plenty pour out unto all,
And unto none my graces do envy:²
Riches, renown, and principality,
Honour, estate, and all this world's good,
For which men swink³ and sweat incessantly,
From me do flow into an ample flood,
And in the hollow earth have their eternal
brood."

If Guyon would deign to serve him, Mammon
promised to place all these mountains, or ten
times so much, at his command. But the
Knight replied that his godhead's vaunt was
vain and his offers were idle; for "regard of
worldly muck doth foully blend and low abase
the high heroic sprite;" and his delight was all
in "fair shields, gay steeds, bright arms," the
riches fit for an adventurous knight. Mammon
told the "vainglorious Elf" that money could
in the twinkling of an eye provide shields,
steeds, and arms, and multiply crowns and
kingdoms to him; for, he cried, "Do I not
kings create, and throw the crown sometimes
to him that low in dust doth lie, and him
that reign'd into his room thrust down?"

"All otherwise," said he, "I riches read,⁴
And deem them root of all disquietness;
First got with guile, and then preserv'd with
dread,
And after spent with pride and lavishness,
Leaving behind them grief and heaviness:
Infinite mischiefs of them do arise;
Strife and debate, bloodshed and bitterness,
Outrageous wrong and hellish covetise;
That noble heart as great dishonour doth despise.

"Nor thine be kingdoms, nor the sceptres thine;
But realms and rulers thou dost both confound,
And loyal truth to treason dost incline:
Witness the guiltless blood pour'd oft on ground;
The crown'd often slain; the slayer crown'd;
The sacred diadem in pieces rent,
And purple robe gor'd⁵ with many a wound;
Castles surpris'd; great cities sack'd and
brent:⁶
So mak'st thou kings, and gainest wrongful
government!

"Long were to tell the troublous storms that
toss

The private state, and make the life unsweet:
Who swelling sails in Caspian sea doth cross,
And in frail wood on Adrian gulf doth fleet,⁷
Doth not, I ween, so many evils meet."

Then Mammon waxing wroth; "And why
then," said,

"Are mortal men so fond⁸ and indiscreet,
So evil thing to seek unto their aid;
And, having not, complain: and, having it, up-
braid?"

"Indeed," quoth he, "through foul intemper-
ance

Frail men are oft captiv'd to covetise:
But would they think with how small allowance
Untroubled nature doth herself suffice,
Such superfluities they would despise,
Which with sad cares impeach⁹ our native joys.
At the well-head the purest streams arise;
But mucky filth¹⁰ his branching arms annoys,
And with uncomely weeds the gentle wave
accloya.¹¹

"The antique world, in his first flow'ring youth,
Found no defect in his Creator's grace;
But with glad thanks, and unrepov'd¹² truth,
The gifts of sov'reign bounty did embrace:
Like angels' life was then men's happy case:
But later ages' pride, like corn-fed steed,
Abus'd her plenty and fat-swoll'n increase
To all licentious lust, and gan exceed
The measure of her mean¹³ and natural first need.

"Then gan a cursed hand the quiet womb
Of his great grandmother with steel to wound,
And the hid treasures in her sacred tomb
With sacrilege to dig: therein he found
Fountains of gold and silver to abound,
Of which the matter of his huge desire
And pompous pride eftsoons he did compound;
Then Avarice gan through his veins inspire
His greedy flames, and kindled life-devouring
fire."

"Son," said he then, "let be thy bitter scorn,
And leave the rudeness of that antique age
To them that liv'd therein in state forlorn.
Thou, that dost live in later times, must wage¹⁴
Thy works for wealth, and life for gold engage.
If then thee list my offer'd grace to use,
Take what thou please of all this surplusage;
If thee list not, leave have thou to refuse:
But thing refus'd do not afterward accuse."

Guyon would receive nothing offered till he
knew how it had been got—for he could not tell
that Mammon had not won his treasures by
force, or blood, or guile. Mammon answered
that never yet had eye view'd, nor tongue told,
nor hand handled them; but safe he had them

in fortune." Odes, i. 83, 15; iii. 9, 23. Spenser must
have thought of these and similar passages when
penning the lines in the text.

⁸ Foolish.

⁹ Impede, destroy.

¹⁰ The filth of vile dress or pelf.

¹¹ Clogs, encumbers.

¹² Unreproached, blameless.

¹³ Moderate.

¹⁴ Pledge.

¹ Judge, hold.

² Begrudge.

³ Toil.

⁴ Regard.

⁵ Pierced.

⁶ Burnt.

⁷ Fleet. The "Adrian gulf" is the "Mare Adri-
num," or, poetically, "Adria"—the Adriatic Sea,
mentioned by Horace as a type of fickleness in love or

"kept in secret mew;" and he led the incredulous Knight through the thick covert, to a darksome way, deep descending through the hollow ground, "that was with dread and horror compassed around."

At length they came into a larger space,
That stretch'd itself into an ample plain;
Through which a beaten broad highway did
trace,¹

That straight did lead to Pluto's grisly reign:
By that wayside there sat infernal Pain,
And fast beside him sat tumultuous Strife;
The one in hand an iron whip did strain,
The other brandish'd a bloody knife;
And both did gnash their teeth, and both did
threaten life.

On th' other side in one consort² there sate
Cruel Revenge, and rancorous Despite,
Disloyal Treason, and heart-burning Hate;
But gnawing Jealousy, out of their sight
Sitting alone, his bitter lips did bite;
And trembling Fear still to and fro did fly,
And found no place where safe he shroud him
might:

Lamenting Sorrow did in darkness lie;
And Shame his ugly face did hide from living eye.
And over them sad Horror, with grim hue,
Did alway soar, beating his iron wings;
And after him owls and night-ravens flew,
The hateful messengers of heavy things,
Of death and dolour telling sad tidings;
While sad Celeno,³ sitting on a clift,⁴
A song of bale⁵ and bitter sorrow sings,
That heart of flint asunder could have rift;
Which having ended, after him she flieth swift.

All these before the gates of Pluto lay;
By whom they passing spake unto them naught.
But th' Elfin Knight with wonder all the way
Did feed his eyes, and fill'd his inner thought.
At last him to a little door he brought,
That to the gate of hell, which gap'd wide,
Was next adjoining, nor them parted aught:
Betwixt them both was but a little stride,
That did the House of Riches from hell-mouth
divide.

Before the door sat self-consuming Care,
Day and night keeping wary watch and ward,
For fear lest Force or Fraud should unaware
Break in, and spoil the treasure there in guard:
Nor would he suffer Sleep once thitherward
Approach, although his drowsy den were next:
For next to Death is Sleep to be compar'd;
Therefore his house is unto his annex:
Here Sleep, there Riches, and Hell-gate them
both betwixt.

So soon as Mammon there arriv'd, the door
To him did open and afforded way:
Him follow'd eke Sir Guyon evermore,

¹ Pass, traverse.

² All together, in one group.

³ Celeno, one of the Harpies.

⁴ Cliff.

⁵ Stride.

⁶ Rents or projecting points of the rock.

⁷ Crevice.

⁸ Calamity.

⁹ Make.

Nor darkness him nor danger might dismay.
Soon as he enter'd was, the door straightway
Did shut, and from behind it forth there leapt
An ugly fiend, more foul than dismal day;
The which with monstrous stalk⁶ behind him
stept,

And ever as he went due watch upon him kept.

Well hop'd he ere long that hardy guest,—
If ever covetous hand, or lustful eye
Or lips, he laid on thing that lik'd him best,
Or ever sleep his eye-strings did untie,—
Should be his prey: and therefore still on high
He over him did hold his cruel claws,
Threat'ning with greedy gripe to do⁷ him die,
And rend in pieces with his ravenous paws,
If ever he transgress'd the fatal Stygian laws.

That House's form within was rude and strong,
Like a huge cave hewn out of rocky clift,
From whose rough vault the ragged breaches⁸
hung

Emboss'd with massy gold of glorious gift,
And with rich metal loaded every rift,⁹
That heavy ruin they did seem to threat;
And over them Arachne¹⁰ high did lift
Her cunning web, and spread her subtile net,
Enwrapp'd in foul smoke and clouds more black
than jet.

Both roof, and floor, and walls, were all of gold,
But overgrown with dust and old decay,
And hid in darkness, that none could behold
The hue thereof: for view of cheerful day
Did never in that House itself display,
But a faint shadow of uncertain light;
Such as a lamp, whose life does fade away;
Or as the moon, cloth'd with cloudy night,
Does shew to him that walks in fear and sad
affright.

In all that room was nothing to be seen
But huge great iron chests, and coffers strong,
All barr'd with double bands, that none could
ween¹¹

Them to enforce by violence or wrong;
On ev'ry side they plac'd were along.
But all the ground with skulls was scatter'd,
And dead men's bones, which round about were
flung;

Whose lives, it seem'd, whilom there were shed,
And their vile carcasses now left unburi'd.

They forward pass; nor Guyon yet spoke word,
Till that they came unto an iron door,
Which to them open'd of his own accord,
And show'd of riches such exceeding store
As eye of man did never see before,
Nor ever could within one place be found,
Though all the wealth which is, or was of yore,
Could gather'd be through all the world around,
And that above were added to that under ground:

¹⁰ Arachne was a Lydian maiden, who excelled in weaving, and so enraged Minerva by the superior excellence of her work in a trial of skill, that the goddess rent the web in pieces. Arachne, in despair, hanged herself; and she was changed into a spider—the rope into the spider's thread.

¹¹ Think,

The charge thereof unto a covetous sprite
 Commanded was, who thereby did attend,
 And warily awaited day and night,
 From other covetous fiends it to defend,
 Who it to rob and ransack did intend.¹
 Then Mammon, turning to that warrior, said ;
 "Lo, here the world's bliss ! lo, here the end,
 To which all men do aim, rich to be made !
 Such grace now to be happy is before thee laid."

"Certes," said he, "I n'ill² thine offer'd grace,
 Nor to be made so happy do intend !
 Another bliss before mine eyes I place,
 Another happiness, another end.
 To them that list these base regards³ I lend :
 But I in arms, and in achievements brave,
 Do rather choose my fitting hours to spend,
 And to be lord of those that riches have,
 Than them to have myself, and be their servile
 slave."

Thereat the Fiend his gnashing teeth did grate,
 And griev'd so long to lack his greedy prey ;⁴
 For well he ween'd that so glorious bait
 Would tempt his guest to take thereof assay :⁵
 Had he so done, he had him snatch'd away
 More light than culver⁶ in the falcon's fist :
 Eternal God thee save from such decay !⁷
 But when as Mammon saw his purpose miss'd,
 Him to entrap unwares another way he wist.⁸

Thence forward he him led, and shortly brought
 Unto another room, whose door forthright
 To him did open as it had been taught :
 Therein a hundred ranges⁹ weren pight,¹⁰
 A hundred furnaces all burning bright ;
 By every furnace many fiends did bide,
 Deform'd creatures, horrible in sight ;
 And ev'ry fiend his busy pains applied
 To melt the golden metal, ready to be tried.

One with great bellows gather'd filling air,
 And with forc'd wind the fuel did inflame ;
 Another did the dying brands repair
 With iron tongs, and sprinkled oft the same
 With liquid waves, fierce Vulcan's¹¹ rage to
 tame,
 Who, mast'ring them, renew'd his former heat :
 Some scumm'd the dross that from the metal
 came ;
 Some stirr'd the molten ore with ladles great :
 And ev'ry one did swink,¹² and ev'ry one did
 sweat.

But, when an earthly wight they present saw,
 Glist'ning in arms and battailous array,
 From their hot work they did themselves with-
 draw
 To wonder at the sight ; for, till that day,
 They never creature saw that came that way :
 Their staring eyes, sparkling with fervent fire,

And ugly shapes, did nigh the man dismay,
 That, were it not for shame, he would retire ;
 Till that him thus bespake their sov'reign lord
 and sire :

"Behold, thou Faery's son, with mortal eye,
 That living eye before did never see !
 The thing that thou didst crave so earnestly,
 To weet¹³ whence all the wealth late show'd by me
 Proceeded, lo ! now is reveal'd to thee.
 Here is the fountain of the world's good !
 Now therefore, if thou wilt enrich'd be,
 Advise¹⁴ thee well, and change thy wilful mood ;
 Lest thou perhaps hereafter wish, and be with-
 stood."

Guyon again refused the Money-god's offers ;
 but Mammon, though much displeased, resolved
 to tempt him yet further.

He brought him, through a darksome narrow
 strait,
 To a broad gate all built of beaten gold :
 The gate was open ; but therein did wait
 A sturdy villain, striding stiff and bold,
 As if the Highest God defy he wo'd :
 In his right hand an iron club he held,
 But he himself was all of golden mould,
 Yet had both life and sense, and well could weld¹⁵
 That curs'd weapon, when his cruel foes he
 quell'd.

Disdain he call'd was, and did disdain
 To be so call'd, and whose did him call :
 Stern was his look, and full of stomach¹⁶ vain ;
 His portance¹⁷ terrible, and stature tall,
 Far passing th' height of men terrestrial ;
 Like a huge giant of the Titans' race ;
 That made him scorn all creatures great and
 small,
 And with his pride all others' pow'r deface :
 More fit amongst black fiends than men to have
 his place.

Soon as those glitt'ring arms he did espy,
 That with their brightness made that darkness
 light,
 His harmful club he gan to hurtle¹⁸ high,
 And threaten battle to the Faery Knight ;
 Who likewise gan himself to battle dight,¹⁹
 Till Mammon did his hasty hand withhold,
 And counsell'd him abstain from perilous fight ;
 For nothing might abash the villain bold,
 Nor mortal steel pierce his miscreated mould.²⁰

So having him with reason pacified,
 And that fierce carl²¹ commanding to forbear,
 He brought him in. The room was large and wide,
 As it some guild²² or solemn temple were ;
 Many great golden pillars did upbear
 The massy roof, and riches huge sustain ;
 And ev'ry pillar deck'd was full dear²³

¹ Strive, design.

² Will not (have).

³ Objects of regard.

⁴ The prey for which he was greedy.

⁵ Trial.

⁶ Pigeon ; from Anglo-Saxon, "culfre."

⁷ Ruin.

⁸ Contrived, (thought he) knew.

⁹ Grates.

¹⁰ Placed.

¹¹ The name of the god is here used to signify his
 especial element, fire.

¹² Labour hard.

¹³ Know.

¹⁴ Wield.

¹⁵ Carriage, port.

¹⁶ Prepare.

¹⁷ Churl, rude fellow.

¹⁸ Hall in which a guild met.

¹⁹ Richly.

²⁰ Consider.

²¹ Haughtiness, violence.

²² Shake, whirl.

²³ Form, body.

With crowns, and diadems, and titles vain,
Which mortal princes wore while they on earth
did reign.

A rout of people there assembled were,
Of every sort and nation under sky,
Which with great uproar press'd to draw near
To th' upper part, where was advanc'd high
A stately siege¹ of sov'reign majesty;
And thereon sat a woman, gorgeous gay,
And richly clad in robes of royalty,
That never earthly prince in such array
His glory did enhance, and pompous pride display.

Her face right wondrous fair did seem to be,
That her broad beauty's beam great brightness
threw

Through the dim shade, that all men might it
see;

Yet was not that same her own native hue,
But wrought by art and counterfeited shew,
Thereby more lovers unto her to call;
Nathless most heav'nly fair in deed and view
She by creation was, till she did fall;
Thenceforth she sought for helps to cloak her
crime withal.

There as in glist'ring glory she did sit,
She held a great gold chain y-link'd well,
Whose upper end to highest heav'n was knit,
And lower part did reach to lowest hell;
And all that press did round about her swell
To catchen hold of that long chain, thereby
To climb aloft, and others to excel:
That was Ambition, rash desire to sty,²
And ev'ry link thereof a step of dignity.

Some thought to raise themselves to high degree
By riches and unrighteous reward;
Some by close should'ring; some by flattery;
Others through friends; others for base regard;
And all, by wrong ways, for themselves prepar'd:³

Those that were up themselves, kept others low;
Those that were low themselves, held others
hard,

Nor suffer'd them to rise or greater grow;
But ev'ry one did strive his fellow down to
throw.

Guyon inquiring who the Lady was, Mammon
answered that she was his daughter, from whom
alone honour, dignity, and all worldly bliss,
were derived.

"And fair Philotimé⁴ she rightly hight,
The fairest wight that wonneth⁵ under sky,

¹ Seat; placed on the dais, or elevated portion of the hall at the upper end, where the lord and the honoured guests sat.

² Soar, mount.

³ Consulted their own interest alone.

⁴ Love of honour or distinction; Greek, *φιλοτιμία*, ambition; from *φιλέω*, I love, and *τιμή*, honour.

⁵ Dwelleth.

⁶ Desire.

⁷ Making an effort to conceal it.

⁸ Declared, described.

⁹ Colocynth, or bitter apple.

¹⁰ Deadly nightshade.

¹¹ Savin.

¹² Hemlock.

But that this darksome nether world her light
Doth dim with horror and deformity,
Worthy of heav'n and high felicity,
From whence the gods have her for envy thrust:
But, since thou hast found favour in mine eye,
Thy spouse I will her make, if that thou list;⁶
That she may thee advance for works and merits
just."

The Knight, with great thanks ("Gramercy"),
declined the offered alliance, on the ground of
inequality of condition, and a prior vow to another
lady: "to change love causeless is reproach
to warlike knight."

Mammon emmov'd was with inward wrath;
Yet, forcing it to feign,⁷ him forth thence
led

Through grisly shadows, by a beaten path,
Into a garden goodly garnish'd
With herbs and fruits, whose kinds might not
be read:⁸

Not such as earth out of her fruitful womb
Throws forth to men, sweet and well savour'd,
But direful deadly black, both leaf and bloom,
Fit to adorn the dead and deck the dreary
tomb.

There mournful cypress grew in greatest store;
And trees of bitter gall; and ebon sad;
Dead sleeping poppy; and black hellebore;
Cold colocintida;⁹ and tetra¹⁰ mad;
Mortal samnitis;¹¹ and cicuta¹² bad,
With which th' unjust Athenians made to die
Wise Socrates, who, thereof quaffing glad,
Pour'd out his life and last philosophy
To the fair Critias, his dearest belamy!¹³

The Garden of Proserpina this hight:
And in the midst thereof a silver seat,
With a thick arbour goodly oversight,¹⁴
In which she often us'd from open heat
Herself to shroud, and pleasures to entreat:¹⁵
Next thereunto did grow a goodly tree,
With branches broad disspread and body great,
Cloth'd with leaves, that none the wood might
see,
And laden all with fruit as thick as it might
be.

Their fruit were golden apples glist'ring bright,
That goodly was their glory to behold;
On earth like never grew, nor living wight
Like ever saw, but they from hence were sold;
For those, which Hercules with conquest bold
Got from great Atlas' daughters,¹⁶ hence began,
And planted there did bring forth fruit of gold;

¹³ Friend—French "bel ami." The poet refers to the dying discourse, reported in the "Phædo" of Plato, in which Socrates, reaching the noblest flight of Greek philosophy, argued for the immortality of the soul. The friend to whom Socrates "poured out his last philosophy," however, was not Critias, but Crito.

¹⁴ Overspread.

¹⁵ Court, enjoy.

¹⁶ Spenser accepts the mythology which makes the Hesperides the daughters of Atlas (called Hesperides from the name of their mother, Hesperis), and not of Hesperus. The maidens, aided by the unsleeping dragon, guarded the golden apples which the Goddess Earth (Gé, gave to Juno on her wedding-day.

And those, with which th' Eubœan young man¹
 wan
 Swift Atalanta, when through craft he her out-
 ran.

Here also sprang that goodly golden fruit,
 With which Acontius got his lover true,
 Whom he had long time sought with fruitless
 suit;²

Here eke that famous golden apple grew,
 The which amongst the gods false Atê threw;
 For which th' Idæan Ladies disagreed,
 Till partial Paris deem'd³ it Venus' due,
 And had of her fair Helen for his meed,
 That many noble Greeks and Trojans made to
 bleed.

The warlike Elf much wonder'd at this tree,
 So fair and great, that shadow'd all the ground;
 And his broad branches, laden with rich fee,⁴
 Did stretch themselves without the utmost
 bound

Of this great garden, compass'd with a mound:
 Which overhanging, they themselves did steep
 In a black flood, which flow'd about it round;
 That is the river of Cocytus deep,
 In which full many souls do endless wail and
 weep.

Which to behold he clomb up to the bank,
 And, looking down, saw many damn'd wights
 In those sad waves, which direful deadly stank,
 Plung'd continually of⁵ cruel sprites,
 That with their piteous cries, and yelling
 shrieks,⁶

They made the farther shore resounden wide:
 Amongst the rest of those same rueful sights,
 One curs'd creature he by chance espied,
 That drench'd⁷ lay full deep under the garden
 side.

Deep was he drench'd to the utmost chin,
 Yet gap'd still as coveting to drink
 Of the cold liquor which he waded in;
 And, stretching forth his hand, did often think
 To reach the fruit which grew upon the brink;
 But both the fruit from hand, and flood from
 mouth,

Did fly aback, and made him vainly swink;⁸
 The while he starv'd with hunger, and with
 drouth⁹

He daily died, yet never throughly dien couth.¹⁰
 The Knight, him seeing labour so in vain,
 Ask'd who he was, and what he meant thereby?
 Who, groaning deep, thus answer'd him again;
 "Most curs'd of all creatures under sky,
 Lo, Tantalus, I here tormented lie!
 Of whom high Jove wont whilom feasted be;
 Lo, here I now for want of food do die!
 But, if that thou be such as I thee see,¹¹
 Of grace I pray thee give to eat and drink to me!"

¹ Hippomenes, the Boeotian (not Eubœan) youth who, dropping along the race-course the three golden apples with which Venus had furnished him, outstripped Atalanta in the race, the prize of which was her hand in marriage—the penalty of failure, death by her hand.

² Acontius, having gone to Delos to the festival of Diana, fell in love with the beautiful Cydippe, and threw into her bosom an apple on which he had written

"Nay, nay, thou greedy Tantalus," the Knight replied, and bade him abide his fate, for an example to make those temperate who live in high degree. Tantalus broke out into revilings and blasphemy against Jove and heaven; while Guyon looked beyond, and saw another wretch, whose carcase was beneath the flood, but whose filthy hands, lifted up on high, seemed to wash themselves eternally, yet ever seemed fouler for the lost labour. Asked who he was, he answered, "I Pilate am, the falsest judge, alas, and most unjust!" who washed his hands in purity the while his soul was soiled with foul iniquity. An infinite number more the Knight saw also tormented there; but Mammon would not let him stay, roughly asking the "fearful fool" why he did not take of the golden fruit, and rest him on the silver stool. All this he did to make the Knight fall, "in frail intemperance, through sinful bait," and render him a prey to the dreadful fiend waiting behind; but Guyon was proof against all temptation.

And now he has so long remain'd there,
 That vital pow'rs gan wax both weak and wan
 For want of food and sleep, which two upbear,
 Like mighty pillars, this frail life of man,
 That none without the same endure can:
 For now three days of men were full outwrought
 Since he this hardy enterprise began:
 Forth¹² great Mammon fairly he besought
 Into the world to guide him back, as he him
 brought.

The god, though loth, yet was constrain'd t' obey;
 For longer time than that no living wight
 Below the earth might suffer'd be to stay:
 So back again him brought to living light.
 But all so soon as his enfeebled sprite
 Gan suck this vital air into his breast,
 As overcome with too exceeding might,
 The life did flit away out of her nest,
 And all his senses were with deadly fit oppress.

CANTO VIII.

*Sir Guyon, laid in swoon, is by
 Acrates' sons despoil'd;
 Whom Arthur soon hath rescued,
 And Paynim brethren foil'd.*

AND is there care in heav'n? And is there love
 In heav'nly spirits to these creatures base,
 That may compassion of their evils move?
 There is: else much more wretched were the case
 Of men than beasts: but O! th' exceeding grace
 Of Highest God that loves his creatures so,

a vow that she would wed him. The maiden pronounced the lines, in the presence of the goddess, and was therefore bound to wed her humble lover.

³ Decreed, adjudged.

⁴ Property, wealth.

⁵ By.

⁶ Shrieks.

⁷ Drowned, immersed.

⁸ Labour in vain.

⁹ Thirst.

¹⁰ Could never thoroughly, really, die.

¹¹ As I judge thee by thine appearance.

¹² Therefore.

And all his works with mercy doth embrace,
That blessed Angels he sends to and fro,
To serve to wicked man, to serve his wicked foe!

How oft do they their silver bowers leave
To come to succour us that succour want!
How oft do they with golden pinions cleave
The fitting skies, like flying pursuivant,
Against foul fiends to aid us militant!
They for us fight, they watch and duly ward,
And their bright squadrons round about us plant;
And all for love and nothing for reward:
O why should Heav'nly God to men have such
regard!

While Guyon abode in Mammon's House, the
Palmer had found passage across the Lake; and
he drew near the place where the Knight lay
aswoon. Then he heard a voice that called
long and clear, "'Come hither, come hither,
oh! come hastily,' that all the fields resounded
with the rueful cry." Following the voice, the
Palmer came to the shady dell "where Mammon
erst did sun his treasury;" and there, to his
dismay, he found the good Guyon "slumbering
fast in senseless dream."

Beside his head there sat a fair young man,
Of wondrous beauty and of freshest years,
Whose tender bud to blossom new began,
And flourish fair above his equal peers:
His snowy front, curl'd with golden hairs,
Like Phoebus' face adorn'd with sunny rays,
Divinely shone; and two sharp wing'd shears,¹
Deck'd with diverse plumes, like painted jay's,
Were fix'd at his back, to cut his airy ways.

Like as Cupido on Idæan hill,²
When, having laid his cruel bow away,
And mortal arrows, wherewith he doth fill
The world with murderous spoils and bloody
prey,
With his fair mother he him dights³ to play,
And with his goodly sisters, Graces three;
The goddess, pleas'd with his wanton play,
Suffers herself through sleep beguil'd to be,
The while the other ladies mind their merry
glee.

The Palmer was speechless through fear and
wonder, till the child called him to behold this
heavy sight—"but dread of death and dolour do
away," for life should erelong to her home re-
turn. The Angel commended to the old man
the charge of the Knight's dear safety, which
God had allotted to him; with a warning to
succour and defend him, for evil was at hand
him to offend; "so having said, oftsoons he
gan display his painted nimble wings, and
vanish'd quite away"—leaving the astonished
Palmer gazing after him, "as fowl escaped by
flight." Turning to his charge, he found life
not yet quite dislodged, and, much rejoicing,
began to cover it tenderly, "as chicken newly
hatched." But now he spied "two Paynim

Knights all arm'd as bright as sky," with an
aged sife beside, and far before a light-foot page,
"that breath'd strife and troublous enmity."
They were Pyrochles and Cymochles, whom
Archimago, meeting on the Idle Strand, had
informed that their conqueror was Guyon bold.
The sons of Acrates, provoked by false Archi-
mago and strifeful Atin, now sought revenge;
and Pyrochles, with insulting words, called
upon the Palmer to abandon soon the caitiff
spoil of that false Knight's outcast carcass:
"Lo! where he now inglorious doth lie, to
prove he liv'd ill, that did thus foully die."
The Palmer fearlessly rebuked Pyrochles for
blotting the honour of the dead; "vile is the
vengeance on the ashes cold, and envy base to
bark at sleeping frame." Cymochles, striking
in, told the Palmer that he doted, and knew
nothing about prowess or knighthood; that
"gold all is not that doth golden seem;" that
he should "the worth of all men by their end
esteem;" and that he judg'd Guyon bad who
thus lay dead on field. "Good or bad," cried
Pyrochles fiercely, it mattered not to him, who
had been balked of his revenge; but, since he
had no other way to wreak his spite, he would
reave Guyon of his arms, "for why should a
dead dog be deck'd in armour bright?" The
Palmer vainly entreated the Paynims to "leave
these relics of his living might to deck
his hearse, and trap his tomb-black steed."
"What hearse or steed," demanded Pyrochles,
"should he have dight, but be entomb'd in
the raven or the kite?"

With that, rude hand upon his shield he laid,
And th' other brother gan his helm unlace;
Both fiercely bent to have him disarray'd;
Till that they spied where toward them did pace
An arm'd knight, of bold and bounteous grace,
Whose squire bore after him an ebon lance
And cover'd shield: well kenn'd him so far
space⁴
Th' Enchanter by his arms and émenánee,⁵
When under him he saw his Libyan steed to
prance;

The enchanter called on the brothers to rise
immediately, and address themselves to battle;
for yonder came "the prowtest knight alive,
Prince Arthur, flower of grace and noblesse,
that hath to Paynim Knights wrought great dis-
tress." Upstarting furiously, they prepared
for combat; and Pyrochles, lacking his own
sword, asked of Archimago that which he bore.
The enchanter would gladly have given it, but
that he knew its power to be contrary to the
work for which it was sought.

"For that same Knight's own sword this is, of
yore
Which Merlin made by his almighty art
For that his nurling, when he knighthood
swore,

therefore, quite appropriately makes it the resort of
Cupid.

¹ Prepares.

² Carriage, bearing.

⁴ Knew him so far off.

³ Wings, with which he shears or cleaves the air.
⁵ Mount Ida, in ancient mythology celebrated as the
scene of several triumphs of Love—such as the rape
of Ganymede, and the judgment of Paris. Spenser,

Therewith to do his foes eternal smart.
The metal first he mix'd with medæwart,¹
That no enchantment from his dint might save;
Then it in flames of Etna wrought apart,
And sev'n times dipp'd in the bitter wave
Of hellish Styx, which hidden virtue to it gave.

"The virtue is, that neither steel nor stone
The stroke thereof from entrance may defend;
Nor ever may be used by his fone;²
Nor forc'd his rightful owner to offend;
Nor ever will it break, nor ever bend;
Wherefore *Morddure*³ it rightfully is hight.
In vain, therefore, Pyrochles, should I lend
The same to thee, against his lord to fight;
For sure it would deceive thy labour and thy
might."

But Pyrochles snatched the "virtuous steel"
out of Archimago's hand, bound Guyon's shield
about his wrist, and turned to face the new
comer. Arthur, having saluted the brothers,—
receiving in return only stern and disdainful
words,—asked the Palmer what great misfor-
tune had befallen the prostrate Knight, "in
whose dead face he read great magnanimity."
Informed that Guyon was only in a trance, and
that the two knights who stood by would dis-
arm him and treat him shamefully, Arthur ap-
pealed in gentle and courteous words for pardon
for the carcase of him "whom fortune hath
already laid in lowest seat." Cymochles, ask-
ing "What art thou that mak'st thyself his
daysman," in arrogant and insolent language
refused to forego his revenge; for "the trespass
still doth live, although the person die."

"Indeed," then said the Prince, "the evil done
Dies not, when breath the body first doth leave;
But from the grandsire to the nephew's⁴ son,
And all his seed, the curse doth often cleave,
Till vengeance utterly the guilt bereave:
So straitly⁵ God doth judge. But gentle knight
That doth against the dead his hand uprear,
His honour stains with rancour and despite,
And great disparagement makes to his former
might."

Pyrochles, in reply, calls Arthur "felon"
and "partaker of his crime;" "therefore, by
Termagaunt,⁶ thou shalt be dead." He then
strikes at Arthur with his own good sword
Morddure; but the faithful steel, disdaining
such treason, swerves aside. In the fierce com-
bat that ensues, the Prince is unhorsed by
Cymochles, and "in dangerous distress, want-
ing his sword when he on foot should fight;"
both the brothers assail him, and on his shield,
as thick as stormy shower, their strokes do
rain. But he never quails nor shrinks back-
ward, receiving the assault as a steadfast
tower the unavailing double battery of the foe.

¹ Meadow-wort, meadow-sweet.

² Foes.

³ The Hard Biter.

⁴ Grandson's; "to the third and fourth generations."

⁵ Strictly.

⁶ The Saracen delty Tervagant or Termagant. See
note 26, page 147.

⁷ Plash, pool.

⁸ Reached.

⁹ As he to whom it belonged.

He wounds Cymochles in the thigh; the spear-
head is left in the wound, out of which "the
red blood flow'd fresh, that underneath his
feet soon made a purple plesh;"⁷ and Pyro-
chles, weeping for very rage to see his brother's
agony, strikes at Arthur with such fury as to
pierce his right side. "Wide was the wound,
and a large lukewarm flood, red as the rose,
thence gush'd grievously;" and the Prince
was in great perplexity, having no weapon but
the truncheon of his headless spear.

Whom when the Palmer saw in such distress,
Sir Guyon's sword he lightly to him raught,⁸
And said; "Fair son, great God thy right hand
bless,

To use that sword so well as he it ought!"⁹
Glad was the Knight, and with fresh courage
fraught,

When as again he arm'd felt his hond:
Then like a lion, which had long time sought
His robb'd whelps, and at the last them fond
Amongst the shepherd swains, then waxeth
wood and yond:¹⁰

So fierce he laid about him, and dealt blows
On either side, that neither mail could hold
Nor shield defend the thunder of his throws:¹¹
Now to Pyrochles many strokes he told;
Eft¹² to Cymochles twice so many fold;
Then, back again turning his busy hand,
Them both at once compell'd with courage bold
To yield wide way to his heart-thrilling¹³ brand;
And though they both stood stiff, yet could not
both withstand.

As savage bull, whom two fierce mastiffs bait,
When rancour doth with rage him once engore,¹⁴
Forgets with wary ward them to await,
But with his dreadful horns them drives afore,
Or flings aloft, or treads down in the floor,
Breathing out wrath, and bellowing disdain,
That all the forest quakes to hear him roar:
So rag'd Prince Arthur 'twixt his foemen twain,
That neither could his mighty puissance sustain.

But ever at Pyrochles when he smit,
(Who Guyon's shield cast ever him before,
Whereon the Faery Queen's portrait was writ,¹⁵)
His hand relented and the stroke forbore,
And his dear heart the picture gan adore;
Which oft the Paynim sav'd from deadly
stowre:¹⁶

But him henceforth the same can save no more;
For now arriv'd is his fatal hour,
That no't¹⁷ avoided be by earthly skill or pow'r.

Arthur soon cleaves the head of Cymochles,
and dismisses his soul to the infernal shades.
Pyrochles, seeing his brother's fall, is struck
with stony fear, and, "as a man whom hellish
fiends have fray'd, long trembling still he

¹⁰ Furious and outrageous; "yond" is the same with
"yonder" = beyond; and since the word outrage is
derived from the Latin "ultra," beyond, the use of
"yond" in the sense intended in the text is perfectly
analogous.

¹¹ Strokes.

¹² Then, again.

¹³ Heart-piercing.

¹⁴ Penetrate.

¹⁵ Represented.

¹⁶ Calamity.

¹⁷ Cannot.

stood." Then, "all desperate, as loathing light, and with revenge 'desiring soon to die," he gathers all his strength, and rushes at Arthur, lashing outrageously, without reason or regard.

As when a windy tempest bloweth high,
That nothing may withstand his stormy stowre,¹
The clouds, as things afraid, before him fly ;
But, all so soon as his outrageous pow'r
Is laid, they fiercely then begin to show'r ;
And, as in scorn of his spent stormy spite,
Now all at once their malice forth do pour :
So did Prince Arthur bear himself in fight,
And suffer'd rash Pyrochles waste his idle might.

At last when as the Saracen perceiv'd
How that strange sword refus'd to serve his need,
But, when he struck most strong, the dint deceiv'd,
He flung it from him ; and, devoid of dread,
Upon him lightly leaping without heed,
'Twixt his two mighty arms engrasp'd fast,
Thinking to overthrow and down him tread :
But him in strength and skill the Prince surpast,
And through his nimble sleight did under him
down cast.

Naught booted it the Paynim then to strive ;
For as a bittern in the eagle's claw,
That may not hope by flight to scape alive,
Still waits for death with dread and trembling
awe ;

So he, now subject to the victor's law,
Did not once move, nor upward cast his eye,
For vile disdain and rancour, which did gnaw
His heart in twain with sad melancholy ;
As one that loath'd life, and yet despis'd to die.

Full of princely bounty and great mind,
Arthur offered Pyrochles life if he would renounce his miscreance, and yield himself his true liegeman for aye ; but Pyrochles disdained the boon, and Arthur, wroth yet sorrowful, struck off his head. Meantime Sir Guyon had wakened from his trance, and asked the Palmer what wicked hand had robbed him of his good sword and shield. The joyous Palmer told him all that had happened ;

Which when he heard, and saw the tokens true,
His heart with great affection was embay'd,²
And to the Prince, with bowing reverence due,
As to the patron of his life, thus said ;
"My lord, my liege, by whose most gracious aid
I live this day, and see my foes subdued,
What may suffice to be for meed repaid
Of so great graces as ye have me shew'd,
But to be ever bound"—

To whom the Infant³ thus ; "Fair Sir, what need
Good turns be counted, as a servile bond,
To bind their doers to receive their meed ?
Are not all knights by oath bound to withstand
Oppressors' power by arms and puissant hand ?
Suffice, that I have done my due in place."

¹ Shock, fury.

² Bathed, soothed.

³ Prince ; from the Spanish "Infante"—although that title is not applied to the eldest son and heir apparent, but to the younger male royal children.

So goodly purpose⁴ they together fand
Of kindness and of courtëous agrace ;⁵
The while false Archimage and Atin fled apace.

CANTO IX.

*The House of Temperance, in which
Doth sober Alma dwell,
Besieged of many foes, whom stronger
knights to flight compel.*

Of all God's works which do this world adorn,
There is no one more fair and excellent
Than is man's body, both for power and form,
While it is kept in sober government ;
But none than it more foul and indecent,
Distemper'd through misrule and passions base ;
It grows a monster, and incontinent⁶
Doth lose his dignity and native grace :
Behold, who list, both one and other in this
place.

After the conquest of the Paynim brethren,
the Prince and Guyon journey on together ; and Arthur asks his companion why he bears on his shield the picture of that Lady's head. Guyon, launching out into praise of her mind's beauty, her virtue, and imperial power, says that

"She is the mighty Queen of Faëry,
Whose fair retrait⁷ I in my shield do bear ;
She is the flow'r of grace and chastity,
Throughout the world renown'd far and near,
My Life, my Liege, my Sovereign, my Dear,
Whose glory shineth as the morning star,
And with her light the earth illumines clear ;
Far reach her mercies, and her praises far,
As well in state of peace, as puissance of war."

"Thrice happy man," said then the Briton Knight,

"Whom gracious lot and thy great valiance
Have made thee soldier of that Princess bright,
Which with her bounty and glad countenance
Doth bless her servants, and them high advance !
How may strange knight hope ever to aspire,
By faithful service and meet aménance,⁸
Unto such bliss ? sufficient were that hire
For loss of thousand lives, to die at her desire."

Guyon answers that there is no meed so great, no grace of earthly prince so sovereign, that the Prince may not easily attain ; and, if he were to enrol himself among the Knights of Maidenhead, he would gain high favour with that Queen. Arthur says that since his first devotion to arms and knighthood his whole desire has been to serve her ; but he has sought her in vain, while the sun with his lamp-burning light hath walked round the world. But for the hard adventure that detains him, Guyon would himself guide the Prince through all Faery Land ; and by request he relates the story "of false Acrasia,

⁴ Discourse.

⁵ Favour.

⁶ Immediately.

⁷ Portrait ; Italian, "ritratto," from "ritrarre," to "retrace," to draw.

⁸ Behaviour.

and her wicked wiles." So they talked, while
"they wasted had much way, and measur'd
many miles."

And now fair Phoebus gan decline in haste
His weary waggon to the western vale,
When as they spied a goodly Castle, plac'd
Foreby¹ a river in a pleasant dale;
Which choosing for that evening's hospitable,²
They thither march'd: but when they came in
sight,
And from their sweaty coursers did avale,³
They found the gates fast barr'd long ere⁴ night,
And ev'ry loop⁴ fast lock'd, as fearing foes'
despite.

Which when they saw, they ween'd foul reproach
Was to them done, their entrance to forestall;⁵
Till that the squire gan nigher to approach,
And wind his horn under the Castle wall,
That with the noise it shook as it would fall.
Eftsoons forth look'd from the highest spire
The watch, and loud unto the knights did call,
To west⁶ what they so rudely did require:
Who gently answer'd, they entrance did desire.

"Fly, fly, good Knights," said he, "fly fast away,
If that your lives ye love, as meet ye should;
Fly fast, and save yourselves from near decay;⁷
Here may ye not have entrance, though we would:
We would, and would again, if that we could;
But thousand enemies about us rave,
And with long siege us in this Castle hold:⁸
Sev'n years this wise they us besieged have,
And many good knights slain that have us sought
to save."

Thus as he spoke, lo! with outrageous cry
A thousand villains round about them swar'm'd
Out of the rocks and caves adjoining nigh;
Vile caitiff wretches, ragged, rude, deform'd,
All threat'ning death, all in strange manner
arm'd;

Some with unwieldy clubs, some with longspears,
Some rusty knives, some staves in fiër warm'd:
Stern was their look; like wild amaz'd steers,
Staring with hollow eyes, and stiff upstanding
hairs.

Fiercely at first those Knights they did assail,
And drove them to recoil: but when again
They gave fresh charge, their forces gan to fail,
Unable their encounter to sustain;
For with such puissance and impetuous main⁹
Those champions broke on them, that for'd them
fly,

Like scatter'd sheep, when as the shepherd-swain
A lion and a tiger doth espy
With greedy pace forth rushing from the forest
nigh.

A while they fled, but soon return'd again

¹ Near.

² Alight, descend.

³ Prevent.

⁴ Destruction.

⁵ "I have read, in the marvellous heart of man,
That strange and mystic scroll,
That an army of phantoms vast and wan
Besiege the human soul."

—LONGFELLOW; "The Besieged City."
⁶ Strength.

⁷ Inn.

⁸ Loop-hole.

⁹ Learn.

With greater fury than before was found;
And evermore their cruel captain
Sought with his rascal routs¹⁰ t' enclose them
round,

And, overrun, to tread them on the ground:
But soon the Knights, with their bright-burning
blades,

Broke their rude troops, and orders did confound,
Hewing and slashing at their idle shades;
For though they bodies seem, yet substance from
them fades.

As when a swarm of gnats at eventide
Out of the fens of Allan¹¹ do arise,
Their murmuring small trumpets sounden wide,
While in the air their clust'ring army flies,
That as a cloud doth seem to dim the skies;
Nor man nor beast may rest or take repast
For their sharp wounds and noxious¹² injuries,
Till the fierce northern wind with blust'ring blast
Doth blow them quite away, and in the ocean
cast.

"That troublous rout dispers'd," the Knights
returned to the Castle gate; and the Lady that
dwelt there came forth to welcome them.

Alma¹³ she call'd was; a virgin bright
That had not yet felt Cupid's wanton rage;
Yet was she woo'd of many a gentle knight,
And many a lord of noble parentage,
That sought with her to link in marriage:
For she was fair, as fair might ever be,
And in the flow'r now of her freshest age;
Yet full of grace and goodly modesty,
That even heav'n rejoic'd her sweet face to see.

In robe of lily white she was array'd,
That from her shoulder to her heel down
raught;¹⁴

The train whereof loose far behind her stray'd,
Branch'd with gold and pearl most richly
wrought,

And borne of two fair damsels, which were taught
That service well: her yellow golden hair
Was trimly woven and in tresses wrought,
Nor other tire¹⁵ she on her head did wear,
But crown'd with a garland of sweet rosiers.¹⁶

She brings the Knights into her Castle hall,
and makes them gentle court and gracious de-
light, "with mildness virginal, showing her-
self both wise and liberal." When they have
rested, they desire to see the Castle; and she
grants the request:

First she them led up to the Castle¹⁷ wall,
That was so high as foe might not it climb,
And all so fair and fencible¹⁸ withal;
Not built of brick, nor yet of stone and lime,
But of thing like to that Egyptian alime
Whereof king Nine¹⁹ whilom built Babel tow'r:

¹⁰ Base-born crowds.

¹¹ The Bog of Allen, in Ireland.

¹² Tormenting.

¹³ Reached.

¹⁴ Rose-tree.

¹⁵ Head-dress.

¹⁶ It is almost needless to say that the Castle is the
body of man, inhabited by Alma, the Soul; and the
allegorical description of the various parts and powers
of the body, like most of Spenser's allegories, easily
explains itself.

¹⁷ Defensible.

¹⁸ Ninus.

But O great pity, that no longer time
So goodly workmanship should not endure!
Soon it must turn to earth: no earthly thing is
sure.

The frame thereof seem'd partly circular,
And part triangular; O work divine!
Those two the first and last proportions are;
The one imperfect, mortal, feminine;
Th' other immortal, perfect, masculine;
And 'twixt them both a quadrate was the base,
Proportion'd equally by seven and nine;
Nine was the circle set in heaven's place:
All which compacted made a goodly diapase.¹

Therein two gates were plac'd seemly well:
The one before, by which all in did pass,
Did th' other far in workmanship excel;
For not of wood, nor of enduring brass,
But of more worthy substance fram'd it was:
Doubly disparted, it did lock and close,
That, when it lock'd, none might thorough pass,
And, when it open'd, no man might it close;
Still open'd to their friends, and clos'd to their
foes.

Of hewen stone the porch was fairly wrought,
Stone more of value, and more smooth and fine,
Than jet or marble far from Ireland brought;
Over the which was cast a wand'ring vine,
Enchas'd² with a wanton ivy twine:
And over it a fair portcullis hung,
Which to the gate directly did incline
With comely compass and compacture strong,
Neither unseemly short, nor yet exceeding long.

Within the barbican³ a porter sate,
Day and night duly keeping watch and ward;
Nor wight nor word might pass out of the gate,
But in good order, and with due regard;
Utt'ers of secrets he from thence debarr'd,
Babblers of folly, and blazers of crime:
His larum-bell might loud and wide be heard
When cause requir'd, but never out of time;
Early and late it rung, at ev'ning and at prime.

And round about the porch on ev'ry side
Twice sixteen warders sat, all arm'd bright
In glist'ring steel, and strongly fortified:
Tall yeomen seem'd they and of great might,
And were enrang'd⁴ ready still for fight.
By them as Alma pass'd with her guests,
They did obeisance, as beseem'd right,
And then again return'd to their rests:
The portereke to her did lout with humble gestic.⁵

Then she them brought into a stately hall,
Wherein were many tables fair dispread,
And ready dight with drapets festival,⁶
Against the viands should be minist'red.

¹ Diapason; concord.

² Adorned, set round.

³ Watch-tower.

⁴ Arrayed in order.

⁵ Bow with humble gestures.

⁶ Prepared, covered, with festival drapery.

⁷ Together.

⁸ Delicacy, fastidiousness.

⁹ Lavish or liberal outlay.

¹⁰ Grates, furnaces.

¹¹ Mongibello, or Monte Ghibello, is the name by which Mount Etna is known to the Italians.

¹² Temper, mitigate.

¹³ Stir.

¹⁴ Clustered, or bustled.

¹⁵ The purchases, or provisions; from the French, "acheter," to buy. Chaucer, in the Prologue to

At th' upper end there sat, y-clad in red
Down to the ground, a comely personage,
That in his hand a white rod manag'd;
He steward was, hight Diet; ripe of age,
And in demeanour sober, and in counsel sage.

And through the hall there walk'd to and fro
A jolly yeoman, marshal of the same,
Whose name was Appetite; he did bestow
Both guests and meat, whenever in they came,
And knew them how to order without blame,
As him the steward bade. They both at one⁷
Did duty to their Lady, as became;
Who, passing by, forth led her guests anon
Into the kitchen room, nor spar'd for niceness⁸
none.

It was a vault y-built for great dispence,⁹
With many ranges¹⁰ rear'd along the wall,
And one great chimney, whose long tunnel thence
The smoke forth threw; and in the midst of all
There plac'd was a cauldron wide and tall,
Upon a mighty furnace, burning hot,
More hot than Etna, or flaming Mongiball:¹¹
For day and night it burn'd, nor ceas'd not,
So long as any thing it in the cauldron got.

But to delay¹² the heat, lest by mischance
It might break out and set the whole on fire,
There added was by goodly ordinance
A huge great pair of bellows, which did stire¹³
Continually, and cooling breath inspire.
About the cauldron many cooks accoil'd¹⁴
With hooks and ladles, as need did require;
The while the viands in the vessel boil'd,
They did about their business sweat, and sorely
toil'd.

The master cook was call'd Concoction;
A careful man, and full of comely guise:
The kitchen clerk, that hight Digestion,
Did order all th' achates¹⁵ in seemly wise,
And set them forth, as well he could devise.
The rest had several offices assign'd;
Some to remove the scum as it did rise;
Others to bear the same away did mind;
And others it to use according to his kind.

But all the liquor which was foul and waste,
Not good nor serviceable else for aught,
They in another great round vessel plac'd,
Till by a conduit pipe it thence were brought;
And all the rest, that noxious¹⁶ was and naught,
By secret ways, that none might it espy,
Was close convey'd, and to the back-gate brought,
That clep'd¹⁷ was Port Esquiline,¹⁸ whereby
It was avoided quite, and thrown out privily.

Which goodly order and great workman's skill

the Canterbury Tales, speaks of the Manciple as one

"Of which achatours might take ensample,
For to be wise in buying of vitaille."

The word seems to have had a special reference to the purchase of provisions; "cate," and "cater," have been derived from the same source.

¹⁶ Offensive, noxious.

¹⁷ Named.

¹⁸ Through the "Porta Esquilina," which led from the Esquiline Mount to the "Campus Esquilinus," the Romans led out their criminals to execution, and carried the bodies of the poor for burial; hence its appropriateness for Spenser's use in the text.

When as those Knights beheld, with rare delight
And gazing wonder they their minds did fill ;
For never had they seen so strange a sight.
Thence back again fair Alma led them right,
And soon into a goodly parlour brought,
That was with royal arras richly dight,¹
In which was nothing portrayed nor wrought ;
Not wrought nor portrayed, but easy to be
thought :

And in the midst thereof, upon the floor,
A lovely bevy of fair Ladies² sate,
Courtied of many a jolly paramour,
The which them did in modest wise amate,³
And each one sought his lady to aggrate.⁴
And eke amongst them little Cupid play'd
His wanton sports, being returned late
From his fierce wars, and having from him laid
His cruel bow, wherewith he thousands hath
dismay'd.

Diverse delights they found themselves to please;
Some sung in sweet consórt;⁵ some laugh'd for
joy ;

Some play'd with straws ; some idly sat at ease ;
But other some could not abide to toy,
All pleasance was to them grief and annoy :
This frown'd ; that fawn'd ; the third for shame
did blush ;

Another seem'd envious, or coy ;
Another in her teeth did gnaw a rush :
But at these strangers' presence ev'ry one did
hush.

Soon as the gracious Alma came in place,
They all at once out of their seats arose,
And to her homage made with humble grace :
Whom when the knights beheld, they gan dispose
Themselves to court, and each a damsel chose :
The Prince by chance did on a lady light,
That was right fair and fresh as morning rose,
But somewhat sad and solemn eke in sight,⁶
As if some pensive thought constrain'd her gentle
sprite.

In a long purple pall, whose skirt with gold
Was fretted⁷ all about, she was array'd ;
And in her hand a poplar branch did hold ;
To whom the Prince in courteous manner said ;
" Gentle Madáme, why be ye thus dismay'd,
And your fair beauty do with sadness spill ?⁸
Lives any that you hath thus ill apaid ?⁹
Or do you love, or do you lack your will ?
Whatever be the cause, it sure beseems you ill."

The damsel answers, " half in disdainful
wise," that she is pensive and sad in mind
" through great desire of glory and of fame ;"
in which, she tells the Prince, he is no way be-
hind, " that hath twelve months sought one,
yet nowhere can her find." Inly moved at her
speech, Arthur endeavours to hide the wound she

has made, " now seeming flaming hot, now
stony cold ;" and he turns softly aside to in-
quire the lady's name—which, he is told, is
Praise-desire. Meanwhile Guyon entertains
another of that gentle crew, a maiden in blue
attire, who often changes her native hue, whose
garment is " close about her tuck'd with many a
plait," and who bears an owl on her fist.

So long as Guyon with her commun'd,
Unto the ground she cast her modest eye,
And ever and anon with rosy red
The bashful blood her snowy cheeks did dye,
That her became, as polish'd ivory
Which cunning craftsman hand hath overlaid
With fair vermilion or pure lastery.¹⁰
Great wonder had the Knight to see the maid
So strangely passion'd,¹¹ —

And gently inquired the cause of her troubled
cheer, that he might try to ease her of her ill.

She answer'd naught, but more abash'd for
shame

Held down her head, the while her lovely face
The flashing blood with blushing did inflame,
And the strong passion¹² marr'd her modest
grace,

That Guyon marvell'd at her uncouth case ;¹³
Till Alma him bespake ; " Why wonder ye,
Fair Sir, at that which ye so much embrace ?¹⁴
She is the fountain of your modesty ;
You shamefast are, but Shamefastness itself is
she."

Thereat the Elf did blush in privy,
And turn'd his face away ; but she the same
Dissembled fair, and feign'd to oversee.¹⁵
Thus they a while, with court and goodly game,
Themselves did solace each one with his dame,
Till that great Lady thence away them sought
To view her Castle's other wondrous frame :
Up to a stately turret¹⁶ she them brought,
Ascending by ten steps of alabaster wrought.

That turret's frame most admirable was,
Like highest heaven compass'd around,
And lifted high above this earthly mass,
Which it surviue'd,¹⁷ as hills do lower ground ;
But not on ground might like to this be found ;
Not that, which antique Cadmus whilom built
In Thebes, which Alexander did confound ;
Nor that proud tower of Troy, though richly gilt,
From which young Hector's¹⁸ blood by cruel
Greeks was spilt.

The roof hereof was arch'd overhead,
And deck'd with flow'rs and herbars¹⁹ daintily ;
Two goodly beacons, set in watches' stead,
Therein gave light and flam'd continually :
For they of living fire most subtilly
Were made, and set in silver sockets bright,
Cover'd with lids devis'd of substance sly,²⁰

¹ Furnished, adorned.

² The Passions and Affections, housed in the " goodly
parlour " of the Heart. ³ Bear them company.

⁴ Gratify, make himself agreeable to.

⁵ Accord, concert. ⁶ Aspect, air.

⁷ Embroidered, adorned. ⁸ Spoil.

⁹ Given you cause for such displeasure, or sadness.

¹⁰ A kind of red colour.

¹¹ Moved.

¹² Emotion.

¹³ Strange demeanour.

¹⁴ Of which you have yourself so large a share.

¹⁵ Not to observe.

¹⁶ The Head.

¹⁷ Overlooked.

¹⁸ Scamandrius, the son of Hector ; whom, honouring
the services of his father, the Trojans styled " Asty-
anax," lord or king of the city. When Troy was taken,
the Greeks hurled him from the walls, that he might
not restore the kingdom.

¹⁹ Plants.

²⁰ Skillfully wrought.

That readily they shut and open might.
O who can tell the praises of that Maker's might!
Ne¹ can I tell, nor can I stay to tell,
This part's great workmanship and wondrous power,

That all this other world's work doth excel,
And likest is unto that heav'nly tower
That God hath built for his own blessed bower:
Therein were divers rooms, and divers stages;
But three the chiefest, and of greatest power,
In which there dwelt three honourable sages,
The wisest men, I ween, that liv'd in their ages.

Not he² whom Greece, the nurse of all good arts,
By Phoebus' doom³ the wisest thought alive,
Might be compar'd to these by many parts:
Nor that sage Pylian sire,⁴ which did survive
Three ages, such as mortal men contrive,⁵
By whose advice old Priam's city fell,
With these in praise of policies might strive.
These three in these three rooms did sundry dwell,

And counsell'd fair Alma how to govern well.

The first of them could things to come foresee;
The next could of things present best advise,⁶
The third things past could keep in memory:⁷
So that no time nor reason could arise,
But that the same could one of these comprise.
Forthy⁸ the first did in the fore-part sit,
That naught might hinder his quick prejudice;⁹
He had a sharp foresight and working wit
That never idle was, nor once would rest a whit.

His chamber was dispaunted all within
With sundry colours, in the which were writ¹⁰
Infinite shapes of things dispers'd thin;
Some such as in the world were never yet,
Nor can devis'd be of mortal wit;
Some daily seen and known by their names,
Such as in idle fantasies do flit;
Infernal hags, centaurs, fiends, hippodames,¹¹
Apes, lions, eagles, owls, fools, lovers, children,
dames.

And all the chamber fill'd was with flies,
Which buzz'd all about, and made such sound
That they encumber'd¹² all men's ears and eyes;
Like many swarms of bees assembled round,
After their hives with honey do abound.
All those were idle thoughts and fantasies,

¹ Neither.

² "The custom of Greece gave the title of *Zoëtos*, or sage, to those who excelled their fellows in science, or moral worth. It is fabled, or perhaps the tale may be a fact, that a golden tripod having been drawn up in their nets by some fishermen of Miletus, a quarrel arose as to its possession. The oracle of Apollo, or Phoebus, "at Delphi was consulted, and the disension was allayed by its award of the tripod 'to the wisest.' The Milesians, by common consent, then offered it to their countryman Thales, who, with a laudable modesty, sent it on to Bias of Priene, who transferred it to Pittacus, and Pittacus to another yet, till it came seventhly to Solon, who, finding no other mortal worthy of it, dedicated it to Apollo, as the only wise." — "A Brief View of Greek Philosophy, up to the Age of Pericles," page 31.

³ Judgment, decision.

⁴ Nestor.

⁵ Three generations, such as mortal men live, or spend: from the Latin, "contero," "contrivi," I wear: way; so Shakespeare speaks of "contriving an afternoon."

⁶ Consider.

Devices, dreams, opinions unsound,
Shows, visions, sooth-says, and prophecies;
And all that feign'd is, as leanings, tales, and lies.

Amongst them all sate he which wonn'd¹³ there,
That hight Phantastes¹⁴ by his nature true;
A man of years yet fresh, as might appear,
Of swart complexion, and of crabbed hue,
That him full of melancholy did shew;¹⁵
Bent hollow beetle brows, sharp staring eyes,
That mad or foolish seem'd: one by his view
Might deem him born with ill-dispos'd skies,
When oblique¹⁶ Saturn sate in th' house of agonies.¹⁷

Whom Alma having show'd to her guests,
Thence brought them to the second room, whose walls

Were painted fair with memorable geste¹⁸
Of famous wizards; and with picturals
Of magistrates, of courts, of tribunals,
Of commonwealths, of states, of policy,
Of laws, of judgments, and of decretals,
All arts, all science, all philosophy,
And all that in the world was ay thought wittily.¹⁹

Of those that room was full; and them among
There sate a Man²⁰ of ripe and perfect age,
Who did them meditate all his life long,
That through continual practice and usage
He now was grown right wise and wondrous sage:
Great pleasure had those stranger Knights to see
His goodly reason and grave personage,
That his disciples both desir'd to be:
But Alma thence them led to th' hindmost room
of three.

That chamber seem'd ruinous and old,
And therefore was remov'd far behind,
Yet were the walls, that did the same uphold,
Right firm and strong, though somewhat they declin'd;
And therein sat an old old Man,²¹ half blind,
And all decrepit in his feeble corse,
Yet lively vigour rested in his mind,
And recompens'd them with a bitter score:²²
Weak body wall is chang'd for mind's redoubled force.

This man of infinite remembrance was,

⁷ In the Tale of the Second Nun (page 175), Chaucer makes Cecilia say that

"— A man hath sapience three,
Memory, engine, and intellect also."

⁸ Therefore. ⁹ Forejudgment. ¹⁰ Depicted.

¹¹ Hippopotami, river-horses. ¹² Bewildered.

¹³ Dwelt. ¹⁴ Fancy, Imagination.

¹⁵ Chaucer, describing the love-sorrow of Arcita, says that his demeanour resembled mania—

"Engender'd of humours melancholic
Before his head in his cell fantastic."

See note 1, page 31. ¹⁶ Unpropitious.

¹⁷ Compare Saturn's own description of those "agonies," in the Knight's Tale, page 41.

¹⁸ Deeds, feats. ¹⁹ Was ever thought wisely.

²⁰ The Judgment.

²¹ Memory; called, a little afterwards, *Eumnestes*, or Well-remembering; *εὐμνηστος* is used by Sophocles in that sense.

²² Compensated his physical failings with a more than equivalent exchange.

And things foregone through many ages held,
Which he recorded still as they did pass,
Nor suffer'd them to perish through long eld,¹
As all things else the which this world doth
weld ;²

But laid them up in his immortal scrine,³
Where they for ever incorrupted dwell'd :
The wars he well remember'd of king Nine,⁴
Of old Assaracus,⁵ and Inachus divine.⁶

The years of Nestor nothing were to his,
Nor yet Methusalem, though longest liv'd ;
For he remember'd both their infancies :
No wonder then if that he were depriv'd
Of native strength, now that he them surviv'd.
His chamber all was hang'd about with rolls
And old records from ancient times deriv'd,
Some made in books, some in long parchment
scrolls,
That were all worm-eaten and full of canker holes.

Amidst them all he in a chair was set,
Tossing and turning them withouten end ;
But, for⁷ he was unable them to fet,⁸
A little boy did on him still attend,
To reach whenever he for aught did send :
And oft when things were lost, or laid amiss,
That boy them sought and unto him did lend :
Therefore he Anamnestes⁹ clep'd¹⁰ is ;
And that old man Eunnestes, by their proper-
ties.

Having done him reverence due, the Knights
began to examine his library. Prince Arthur
found an ancient book, called "Briton Moni-
ments," treating of this land's first conquest
and final reduction to a single realm ; while Sir
Guyon chanced upon the "Antiquity of Faery
Land," containing the genealogy of Elves and
Fairies. "Burning both with fervent fire their
country's ancestry to understand," they craved
and obtained leave to read those books.

CANTO X.

*A Chronicle of Briton Kings,
From Brute to Uther's reign ;
And rolls of Elfin Emperors,
Till time of Gloriane.*

WHO now shall give unto me words and sound
Equal unto this haughty¹¹ enterprise ?

¹ Age.

² Weld ; possess or use.

³ Cabinet, document-chest.

⁴ Ninus, the mythical founder of Nineveh, about 2200 years before Christ.

⁵ King of Troy ; the great-grandfather of Æneas, and thence taken as the original of the Roman people ; which Virgil, in a passage that Spenser doubtless had in mind when he placed Assaracus among the oldest famous memories, calls "domus Assaraci" (Æneid, i. 284).

⁶ The first king of Argos, termed "divine" because, according to fable, he was born of the sea-gods Oceanus and Tethys.

⁷ Because.

⁸ Fetch.

⁹ Recollection ; from the Greek, ἀναμνησκω, I re-
mind ; ἀναμνησις, the act of recollecting. Spenser
follows the distinction drawn by Aristotle and Plato
between ἀναμνησις and μνημη—recollection and
memory ; and our common phrase "to bring to

Or who shall lend me wings, with which from
ground

My lowly verse may loftily arise,
And lift itself unto the highest skies ?
More ample spirit than hitherto was wont
Here needs me, while the famous ancestries
Of my most dreaded Sov'reign I recount,
By which all earthly princes she doth far sur-
mount.

Nor under sun that shines so wide and fair,
Whence all that lives does borrow life and light,
Lives aught that to her lineage may compare ;
Which, though from earth it be deriv'd right,
Yet doth itself stretch forth to heaven's height,
And all the world with wonder overspread ;
A labour huge, exceeding far my might !
How shall frail pen, with fear disparag'd,
Conceive such sov'reign glory and great bounti-
head !¹²

Argument worthy of Mæonian¹³ quill ;
Or rather worthy of great Phoebus' rote,¹⁴
Whereon the ruins of great Ossa hill,
And triumphs of Phlegrean Jove,¹⁵ he wrote,¹⁶
That all the gods admir'd his lofty note.
But, if some relish of that heav'nly lay
His learn'd daughters would to me report,
To deck my song withal, I would assay
Thy name, O sov'reign Queen, to blazon far away.

Thy name, O sov'reign Queen, thy realm, and race,
From this renown'd Prince¹⁷ deriv'd are,
Who mightily upheld that royal mace¹⁸
Which now thou bear'st, to thee descended far
From mighty kings and conquerors in war,
Thy fathers and great-grandfathers of old,
Whose noble deeds above the northern star
Immortal Fame for ever hath enroll'd ;
As in that Old Man's book they were in order
told.

The succeeding sixty-three stanzas of this
canto are occupied by the "chronicle of Briton
Kings from Brute to Uther's reign ;" which is
taken almost entirely from the fabulous history
of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and may, without de-
triment to the poem or injustice to the poet, be
presented in very brief outline. Britain, we are
told, "in antique times was salvage wilderness,
unpeopled, unmanur'd, unprov'd, unprais'd ;"
desolate and deserving no name "till that the
venturous mariner that way learning his ship

memory" simply embodies in plain words the poet's
allegory of recollection as the servant of memory.

¹⁰ Called.

¹¹ Lofty.

¹² Goodness, virtue.

¹³ Homeric. Homer was supposed to have been born
in Mæonia, or Lydia ; and Ovid calls the Muses
"Mæonidæ," from the presumed birthplace of their
greatest son.

¹⁴ In Moore's "Cyclopædia of Music," Rote is de-
scribed as an old instrument generally supposed to have
been the same as the English hurdy-gurdy, the tones of
which are produced by the friction of a wheel ; Latin,
"rota." Here, of course, the word is used in the general
sense of "lyre" or "harp." The "quill," in the pre-
ceding line, is the "plectrum" with which the player
on stringed instruments struck the chords.

¹⁵ The giants, in that war with the gods during which
they piled Mount Ossa on Mount Pelion to reach heaven,
attacked their foes on the plain of Phlegra, in Mace-
donia, but were defeated by the aid of Hercules.

¹⁶ Described.

¹⁷ Arthur.

¹⁸ Sceptre.

from those white rocks to save" that lay all along the southern coast, made the same his sea-mark, and named it ALBION. Far inland dwelt a savage nation "of hideous giants, and half-beastly men that never tasted grace, nor goodness felt; but wild, like beasts, lurking in loathsome den, and flying fast as roebuck through the fen," all naked, living by the chase and by plunder. This abhorrent race of savages and giants was, after great battles, dispossessed by Brutus, anciently derived from royal stock of old Assarac's line—that is, from the kings of Troy.¹ Brutus was aided by Corineus, who gave the name of Cornwall to his province; by Devon, from whom Devonshire was named; and by Canute, whose portion was called Canutum—now Kent. Dying, Brutus left three sons, "born of fair Imogene of Italy," among whom he parted his realm, under the supreme sovereignty of Locrinus; Albanact having the northern part, which he called Albania (Albyn or Scotland), Camber the western part, and Logris the southern. A nation strange, with visage swart and courage fierce, invaded the north like Noah's great flood, but was overthrown by Locrinus at the Humber—so called from the opposing leader, drowned in the stream as he fled. Locrinus, puffed up by triumph, grew insolent, and lewdly loved fair Lady Estrild; withdrawing his heart from the faithful Guendolene, his wife, "the noble daughter of Corineus." The queen, not enduring to be thus disdained, encountered and vanquished her husband in battle; he was taken captive; Lady Estrild was slain on the spot; and "her daughter dear, begotten by her kingly paramour," the lovely Sabrina—"sad virgin, innocent of all, adown the rolling river she did pour, which of her name now Severn men do call." Guendoline ruled gloriously for her son Madan, till he grew to man's estate; then he reigned unworthily, succeeded by Memprise, "as unworthy of that place," and by Ebranck, who "salv'd both their infamies with noble deeds," made war on the German hero Brunechild, and by his twenty sons subdued all Germany. The second Brutus succeeded, who "with his victor sword first open'd the bowels of wide France, a forlorn dame," and paved the way to future conquests. Leill next "enjoy'd a heritage of lasting peace, and built Caerleill and built Caerleon strong." After pacific Huddibras, reigned Bladud the learned, of whose wondrous faculty the boiling baths at Caerbadon (Bath) are an ensample; but, striving to excel the might of men, he was dashed to pieces in an attempt to fly. Then comes the story of Lear, which, sixteen years after "The Faerie Queen" was published, Shakespeare, with important changes and far loftier power, took as the theme of his great tragedy.

Next him king Leir in happy peace long reign'd,
But had no issue male him to succeed,

¹ See note 5, page 395.

² Government.

But three fair daughters, which were well up-
train'd

In all that seem'd fit for kingly seed;
'Mongst whom his realm he equally decreed
To have divided: then, when feeble age
Nigh to his utmost date he saw proceed,
He call'd his daughters, and with speeches sage
Inquir'd which of them most did love her
parentage.

The eldest, Gonoril, gan to protest
That she much more than her own life him
lov'd;

And Regan greater love to him profest
Than all the world, whenever it were prov'd;
But Cordeill said she lov'd him as behov'd:
Whose simple answer, wanting colours fair
To paint it forth, him to displeasance mov'd,
That in his crown he counted her no heir,
But 'twixt the other twain his kingdom whole
did share.

So wedded th' one to Maglan king of Scots,
And th' other to the king of Cambria,
And 'twixt them shar'd his realm by equal lots;
But, without dower, the wise Cordelia
Was sent to Aganip of Celtica:
Their aged sire, thus eas'd of his crown,
A private life led in Albania
With Gonoril, long had in great renown,
That naught him griev'd to be from rule depos'd
down.

But true it is, that, when the oil is spent,
The light goes out, and wick is thrown away;
So, when he had resign'd his regiment,²
His daughter gan despise his drooping day,
And weary wax of his continual stay:
Then to his daughter Regan he repair'd,
Who him at first well us'd every way;
But, when of his departure she despair'd,
Her bounty she abated, and his cheer impair'd.

The wretched man gan then advise³ too late,
That love is not where most it is profest;
Too truly tried in his extremest state!
At last, resolv'd likewise to prove the rest,
He to Cordelia himself addrest,
Who with entire affection him receiv'd,
As for her sire and king her seem'd best;
And after all an army strong she leav'd,⁴
To war on those which him had of his realm
bereav'd.

Lear, restored to his crown, died at a ripe old
age; succeeded by Cordelia, who, at last de-
posed and imprisoned by her sister's children,
hanged herself in prison. Cundah, slaying his
brother Morgan, reigned alone; then succeeded
Rivall—"in whose sad time blood did from
heaven rain"—great Gurgustus, fair Cæcily,
Lago and Kinmarke, Gorbogud, and his rebel-
lious sons "stout Ferrex and stern Porrex."

Here ended Brutus' sacred progeny,
Which had sev'n hundred years this sceptre
borne

With high renown and great felicity:

³ Consider.

⁴ Levied.

The noble branch from th' antique stock was
torn
Through discord, and the royal throne forlorn.¹
Thenceforth this realm was into factions rent,
Whilst each of Brutus boasted to be born,
That in the end was left no monument
Of Brutus, nor of Britons' glory ancient.

Then up arose a man of matchless might,
And wondrous wit to manage high affairs,
Who, stirr'd with pity of the 'stressed plight
Of this sad realm, cut into sundry shares
By such as claim'd themselves Brute's rightful
heirs,

Gather'd the princes of the people loose²
To taken counsel of their common cares;
Who, with his wisdom won, him straight did
choose
Their king, and swore him fēalty to win or lose.

Then made he sacred laws, which some men say
Were unto him reveal'd in vision;
By which he freed the traveller's high-way,
The Church's part, and ploughman's portiōn,
Restraining stealth and strong extortiōn;
The gracious Numa of great Brittany:³
For, till his days, the chief dominiōn
By strength was wielded without policy:
Therefore he first wore crown of gold for dignity.

The wise and good Donwallo, dying, left two
sons of peerless prowess, as sacked Rome and
ransacked Greece assayed—"Brennus and Be-
linus, kings of Brittany." Next came Gurgunt,
Guitheline, Sifillus, Kimarus, Danius, Morin-
dus, his five sons in turn, then all the sons of
these five brethren, and all their grandsons—
thrice eleven descents in the same family, till
aged Hely by due heritage gained the crown.
Lud, his eldest son, rebuilt the ruined walls
"of Troynovant,"⁴ 'gainst force of enemy, and
built that Gate which of his name is hight, by
which he lies entomb'd solemnly." Cassibel-
anus was chosen by the people to reign instead of
Lud's young sons; and during his reign "war-
like Cæsar, tempted with the name of this
sweet Island never conquer'd," came hither
with his Romans.

Yet twice they were repuls'd back again,
And twice enfor'd back to their ships to fly;
The while with blood they all the shore did stain,
And the gray ocean into purple dye:
Nor had they footing found at last, pardie,⁵
Had not Androgeus, false to native soil,
And envious of uncle's sov'reignty,
Betray'd his country unto foreign spoil.
Naught else but treason from the first this land
did foil!⁶

The chronicle now entered upon historical
ground. After Cassibelanus reigned Tenantius;
"then Kimbeline, what time th' Eternal Lord

in fleshly slime enwomb'd was, from wretched
Adam's line to purge away the guilt of sinful
crime." Slain by treachery in the invasion of
Claudius, Kimbeline was succeeded by Arvi-
ragus, who compelled the Romans to seek peace,
obtained the Emperor's daughter in marriage,
and renounced the vassalage of Rome. Brought
into subjection by Vespasian, he died; then
reigned Marius, Coill, and "after him good
Lucius, that first receiv'd Christianity;"
though long before that day Joseph of Arima-
thea had come hither, bringing the Holy Grail,
and preaching the truth. The death of Lucius
without children gave the Romans an oppor-
tunity of profiting by the divisions of the Bri-
tons; which seeing, Boadicea took arms and
attacked the Romans, but was defeated, and
slew herself rather than be made captive.

O famous monument of women's praise!
Matchable either to Semiramis,
Whom antique history so high doth raise,
Or to Hypsipyl', or to Tomyris:⁷
Her host two hundred thousand number'd is;
Who, while good fortune favour'd her might,
Triumph'd oft against her enemies;
And yet, though overcome in hapless fight,
She triumph'd on death, in enemies' despite.

Fulgent, Carausius, Allectus, Asclepiodatus,
interposed between Boadicea and Coill—the first
crowned sovereign of the Britons since Lucius'
time. Under Coill the realm began to "renew
her pass'd prime;" and "he of his name Coyl-
chester built of stone and lime." He gave to
Constantius his daughter Helena, most famous
for her skill in music; and of her was begotten
Constantine, afterwards Emperor of Rome.
Octavius usurped the place of the absent Con-
stantine, and gave his daughter to Maximian;
during whose reign the Huns and Picts began
to invade the land. The weary Britons were
worn out by miseries under the new invaders,
and gladly, "by consent of Commons and of
Peers, they crown'd the second Constantine
with joyous tears." He often vanquished in
battle "the spoilful Picts, and swarming Easter-
lings," and pacified the realm; building, against
the incursions of the Scots, "a mighty mound,
which from Alcluid to Panwelt did that
border bound." Vortigern usurped the crown
during the pupillage of his two nephews—the sons
of Constantine; and, fearing their attempts to
reinstate themselves, he sent to Germany strange
aid to rear. "Three hoys of Saxons," under
Hengist and Horsa, arrived; and their leaders
took advantage of the divisions of the Britons
to drive Vortigern from the kingdom. Restored
by the help of his son Vortimere, he received
Hengist back into favour, through the fair face
and flattering word of his daughter Rowena.
But now the fugitive sons of Constantine, having

Cyrus when he threatened to invade her territory,
overthrew and slew him, and ordered his severed head
to be thrown into a vessel full of human blood—with
the bitter exhortation to the dead prince to satiate
himself with the gore for which he had thirsted.

¹ Left vacant.

² Scattered, divided.

³ That is, in Britain he played the part that Numa
Pompilius did in ancient Rome.

⁴ London.

⁵ Assuredly.

⁶ Defeat, baffle.

⁷ Queen of the Massagete, who marched against

attained ripe years, arrived to reclaim the crown ;
they slew Vortigern and Hengist, and Aurelius
reigned peaceably "till that through poison
stopp'd was his breath ; so now entomb'd
lies at Stonehenge by the heath."

After him Uther,¹ which Pendragon hight,
Succeeding—There abruptly did it end,
Without full point, or other cesure² right ;
As if the rest some wicked hand did rend,
Or th' author's self could not at last attend
To finish it : that so untimely breach
The Prince himself half seem'd to offend ;
Yet secret pleasure did offence empeach,³
And wonder of antiquity long stopp'd his speech.

At last, quite ravish'd with delight to hear
The royal offspring of his native land,
Cried out ; "Dear country ! O how dearly dear
Ought thy remembrance and perpetual band
Be to thy foster child, that from thy hand
Did common breath and nurture⁴ receive !
How brutish is it not to understand
How much to her we owe, that all us gave ;
That gave unto us all whatever good we have !"

But Guyon all this while his book did read,
Nor yet had ended : for it was a great
And ample volume, that doth far exceed
My leisure so long leaves here to repeat :
It told how first Prometheus did create
A man, of many parts from beasts deriv'd,
And then stole fire from heav'n to animate
His work, for which he was by Jove depriv'd
Of life himself, and heart-strings of an eagle
riv'd.⁵

That man so made he call'd Elf, to weet
Quick,⁶ the first author of all Elfin kind ;
Who, wand'ring through the world with weary
feet,

Did in the gardens of Adonis find
A goodly creature, whom he deem'd in mind
To be no earthly wight, but either sprite,
Or angel, th' author of all woman kind ;
Therefore a Fay he her according hight,
Of whom all Faeries spring, and fetch their
lineage right.

Of these a mighty people shortly grew,
And puissant kings which all the world war-
ray'd,⁷

And to themselves all nations did subdue :
The first and eldest, which that sceptre sway'd,
Was Elfin : him all India obey'd,
And all that now America men call :
Next him was noble Elfinan, who laid
Oleopolis' foundation first of all :
But Elfinan enclos'd it with a golden wall.

His son was Elfinell, who overcame
The wicked Gobbelins in bloody field :
But Elfant was of most renown'd fame,
Who all of crystal did Panthea build :

¹ The father of Arthur.

² *Cesura*, stop.

³ Prevent.

⁴ Nurture.

⁵ Torn by an eagle.

⁶ That is to say, Alive.

⁷ Made war upon.

⁸ Elficleos is Henry VII. ; Elferon, his eldest son
Prince Arthur, who died young ; mighty Oberon, Prince

Then Elfar, who two brethren giants kill'd,
The one of which had two heads, th' other three :
Then Elfinor, who was in magic skill'd ;
He built by art upon the glassy sea
A bridge of brass, whose sound heav'n's thunder
seem'd to be.

He left three sons, the which in order reign'd,
And all their offspring, in their due descents ;
Ev'n seven hundred princes, which maintain'd
With mighty deeds their sundry governments :
That were too long their infinite contents
Here to record, nor much material :
Yet should they be most famous monuments,
And brave ensample, both of martial
And civil rule, to kings and states imperial.

After all these Elficleos⁸ did reign,
The wise Elficleos in great majesty,
Who mightily that sceptre did sustain,
And with rich spoils and famous victory
Did high advance the crown of Faëry :
He left two sons, of which fair Elferon,
The eldest brother, did untimely die ;
Whose empty place the mighty Oberon
Doubly supplied, in spousal and dominion.

Great was his pow'r and glory over all
Which, him before, that sacred seat did fill,
That yet remains his wide memorial :
He, dying, left the fairest Tanaquill
Him to succeed therein, by his last will :
Fairer and nobler liveth none this hour,
Nor like in grace, nor like in learn'd skill ;
Therefore they Glorian' call that glorious flow'r :
Long may'st thou, Glorian', live in glory and
great pow'r !

Beguil'd thus with delight of novelties,
And natural desire of country's state,
So long they read in those antiquities,
That how the time was fled they quite forgate ;⁹
Till gentle Alma, seeing it so late,
Perforce their studies broke, and them besought
To think how supper did them long await :
So half unwilling from their books them brought,
And fairly feasted as so noble knights she ought.

CANTO XL

*The enemies of Temperance
Besiege her dwelling-place ;
Prince Arthur them repels, and foul
Malice doth deface.*¹⁰

WHAT war so cruel, or what siege so sore,
As that which strong Affections do apply
Against the fort of Reason evermore,
To bring the Soul into captivity ?
Their force is fiercer through infirmity
Of the frail flesh, relenting to their rage ;

Henry—afterwards Henry VIII., who doubly supplied
his brother's empty place, by succeeding to the throne
and by marrying Catharine of Aragon, who had been
affianced to Arthur ; and Tanaquill, or Gloriana, is, of
course, Queen Elizabeth.

⁹ Forgot.

¹⁰ Destroy.

And exercise most bitter tyranny
Upon the parts brought into their bondage :
No wretchedness is like to sinful villenage.¹

But in a body which doth freely yield
His parts to Reason's rule obedient,
And letteth her that ought the sceptre wield,
All happy peace and goodly government
Is settled there in sure establishment.
There Alma, like a Virgin Queen most bright,
Doth flourish in all beauty excellent ;
And to her guests doth bounteous banquet
dight,²
Attemper'd goodly well for health and for delight.

"Early, before the Morn, with crimson ray,"
had opened the windows of bright heaven,
Guyon and the Palmer took their departure ;
at the ford, on the river's side, a ferryman in-
structed by Alma awaited them ; when they
were on board he launched his bark instantly,
and was soon out of sight. Here the poet leaves
Guyon, and returns to Arthur, who did a cruel
fight that day.

For, all so soon as Guyon thence was gone
Upon his voyage with his trusty guide,
That wicked band of villains fresh begun
That Castle to assail on every side,
And lay strong siege about it far and wide.
So huge and infinite their numbers were,
That all the land they under them did hide ;
So foul and ugly, that exceeding fear
Their visages impress'd, when they approach'd
near.

Dividing them into twelve troops, their cap-
tain placed seven (the Cardinal or Deadly Sins)
against the Castle gate, which they battered
day and night ; the other five troops were dis-
posed against the five great bulwarks of the pile
(the Five Senses). All accepted their charge
with malicious zeal, "and planted there their
huge artillery, with which they daily made
most dreadful battery."

The first troop was a monstrous rabblement
Of foul misshapen wights, of which some were
Headed like owls, with beaks uncomely bent ;
Others like dogs ; others like griffins drear ;
And some had wings, and some had claws to tear :
And ev'ry one of them had lynx's eyes ;
And ev'ry one did bow and arrows bear :
All those were lawless Lusts, corrupt Envies,
And covetous Aspects, all cruel enemies.

Those same against the bulwark of the Sight
Did lay strong siege and battailous assault,
Nor once did yield it respite day nor night ;
But, soon as Titan³ gan his head exalt,
And soon again as he his light witholt,⁴
Their wicked engines they against it bent ;
That is, each thing by which the eyes may fault.⁵
But two than all more huge and violent,
Beauty and Money, they that bulwark sorely
rent.

¹ The servitude of sin.

² The Sun.

³ Fail, err.

⁴ Falschoods.

⁵ Prepare.

⁶ Withheld.

⁷ Attack.

The second bulwark was the Hearing Sense,
'Gainst which the second troop designment⁶
makes ;

Deform'd creatures, in strange difference :
Some having heads like harts, some like to
snakes,
Some like wild boars laterous'd out of the brakes ;
Sland'rous Reproaches, and foul Infamies,
Leasings,⁷ Backbitings, and vain-glorious
Crakes,⁸

Bad Counsels, Praises, and false Flatteries :
All those against that fort did bend their bat-
teries.

Likewise that same third fort, that is the Smell,
Of that third troop was cruelly assay'd ;
Whose hideous shapes were like to fiends of hell,
Some like to hounds, some like to apes, dismade ;⁹
Some, like to puttocks,¹⁰ all in plumes array'd ;
All shap'd according their conditions :
For by those ugly forms weren portray'd
Foolish Delights, and fond Abusions,¹¹
Which do that Sense besiege with light illusions.

And that fourth band, which cruel battery bent
Against the fourth bulwark, that is the Taste,
Was, as the rest, a greasy¹² rabblement ;
Some mouth'd like greedy ostriches ; some fac'd
Like loathly toads ; some fashion'd in the waist
Like swine : for so deform'd is Luxury,
Surfeit, Misdiet, and unthrifty Waste,
Vain Feasts, and idle Superfluity :
All those this Sense's fort assail incessantly.

But the fifth troop, most horrible of hue
And fierce of force, is dreadful to report ;
For some like snails, some did like spiders shew,
And some like ugly urchins¹³ thick and short :
Cruelly they assailed that fifth fort,
Arm'd with darts of sensual Delight,
With stings of carnal Lust, and strong effort
Of feeling Pleasures, with which day and night
Against that same fifth bulwark they continu'd
fight.

The "restless siege" went on, and the "hide-
ous ordinance" evermore cruelly played on the
bulwarks of the Castle ; till it began to threaten
near decay. But the besieged garrison strongly
repelled all attacks, mightily aided by the "two
brethren giants," Arthur and his squire. Alma,
however, grew "much dismay'd with that
dreadful sight ;" and the Prince, to reassure
her, offered to go forth and fight for her defence
against the carl "which was their chief and
th' author of that strife." Soon, issuing through
the unbarred gates, with his gay squire, he was
espied by that unruly rabblement ; who "reared
a most outrageous dreadful yelling cry :"

And therewithal at once at him let fly
Their flutt'ring arrows, thick as flakes of snow,
And round about him flock impetuously,
Like a great water-flood, that tumbling low
From the high mountains, threats to overflow
With sudden fury all the fertile plain,

⁸ Boasts.

⁹ Mismade, misshapen.

¹⁰ Kites.

¹¹ Foolish deceptions.

¹² Hedgehogs.

¹³ Filthy, gross.

And the sad husbandman's long hope doth throw
Adown the stream, and all his vows make vain;
Nor bounds nor banks his headlong ruin may
sustain.

Upon his shield their heap'd hail he bore,
And with his sword dispers'd the rascal¹ flocks,
Which fled asunder, and him fell before;
As wither'd leaves drop from their drier'd stocks,
When the wroth western wind does reave²
their locks:

And underneath him his courageous steed,
The fierce Spumador,³ trod them down like
docks;
The fierce Spumador born of heav'nly seed;
Such as Laomedon of Phœbus' race did breed.

Which sudden horror and confus'd cry
When as their captain heard, in haste he yode⁴
The cause to weet,⁵ and fault to remedy:
Upon a tiger swift and fierce he rode,
That as the wind ran underneath his load,
While his long legs nigh raught⁶ unto the
ground:

Full large he was of limb, and shoulders broad;
But of such subtle substance and unsound,
That like a ghost he seem'd whose grave-clothes
were unbound:

And in his hand a bended bow was seen,
And many arrows under his right side,
All deadly dangerous, all cruel keen,
Headed with flint, and feathers bloody dy'd;
Such as the Indians in their quivers hide:
Those could he well direct, and straight as line,
And bid them strike the mark which he had ey'd;
Nor was there salve, nor was there medicine,
That might recure their wounds; so inly they
did tine.⁷

As pale and wan as ashes was his look;
His body lean and meagre as a rake;
And skin all wither'd like a drier'd rook;⁸
Thereto⁹ as cold and dreary as a snake;
That seem'd to tremble evermore and quake:
All in a canvas thin he was bedight,¹⁰
And girded with a belt of twisted brake:¹¹
Upon his head he wore a helmet light,
Made of a dead man's skull, that seem'd a
ghastly sight:

Maleger¹² was his name: and after him
There follow'd fast at hand two wicked hags,
With hoary locks all loose, and visage grim;
Their feet unshod, their bodies wrapt in rags,
And both as swift on foot as chas'd stags;
And yet the one her other leg¹³ had lame,
Which with a staff all full of little snags¹⁴
She did support, and Impotence her name:
But th' other was Impatience arm'd with raging
flame.

Felly pricking his beast towards the Prince,
the carl shot at him a cruel shaft, which fell

harmless on his shield. Arthur, couching his
spear, rode fiercely at his assailant, to prevent
the shower of arrows which he shot; but Ma-
leger fled fast away, and Arthur could not
approach him.

For as the wing'd wind his tiger fled,
That view of eye could scarce him overtake,
Nor scarce his feet on ground were seen to tread;
Through hills and dales he speedy way did make,
Nor hedge nor ditch his ready passage brake,
And in his flight the villain turn'd his face
(As wents the Tartar by the Caspian Lake,
When as the Russian him in fight does chase),
Unto his tiger's tail, and shot at him apace.

"Apace he shot, and yet he fled apace," till
Arthur resolved to follow him no more, but
keep his stand, and avoid the arrows, until the
perilous store was spent. Impotence, the lame
hag, however, gathered up Maleger's shafts as
fast as he shot them, and brought them to him
again; and Arthur, dismounting, seized her
and began to tie her hands. But Impatience,
coming up in haste, threw him backward to the
ground as he leaned over her sister; there,
"with rude hands and grisly grapplement,"
they held him down till the villain came to
their aid; and under their blows the Prince
might have perished, but for the opportune
onslaught of his gentle squire—who snatched
off and held at bay the hags, while Arthur,
pricked with reproachful shame, "united all
his powers to purge himself from blame."

Like as a fire, the which in hollow cave
Hath long been underkept and down suppress,
With murmurous disdain doth inly rave
And grudge, in so strait prison to be prest,
At last breaks forth with furious unrest,
And strives to mount into his native seat;
All that did erst it hinder and molest,
It now devours with flames and scorching heat,
And carries into smoke with rage and horror
great.

So mightily the Briton Prince him rous'd
Out of his hold, and broke his captive¹⁵ bands;
And as a bear, whom angry curs have touz'd,¹⁶
Having off-shak'd them and escap'd their hands,
Becomes more fell, and all that him withstands
Treads down and overthrows. Now had the carl
Alighted from his tiger, and his hands
Discharg'd of his bow and deadly quarl,¹⁷
To seize upon his foe flat lying on the marl.¹⁸

Maleger, disarmed and "far from his monstrous
swarm," was taken at disadvantage; and Arthur,
yet wrothful for his late disgrace, felled him to
the ground with his iron mace. While Arthur
fancied the field his own, his foe sprang up as
if he had never been hurt, and snatched and
threw at the Prince with exceeding sway "a

¹ Base, depraved.

² Strip off.

⁴ Went.

⁶ Reached.

⁸ Like a dried-up rick of corn or hay.

⁹ Besides.

¹¹ Bracken, fern.

³ The Foamer.

⁵ Learn.

⁷ Inflame, rankle.

¹⁰ Dressed.

¹² A name derived from Latin, "malum," evil, and
"ager," sick; it signifies the disease produced by
evil passions and indulgences.

¹⁴ Knobs.

¹⁶ Teased, harassed.

¹⁷ Arrows, bolts; called "quarrel" from the four-
square form of the head.

¹³ Her left leg.

¹⁵ Captive.

¹⁸ Ground.

huge great stone, which stood upon one end, and had not been remov'd many a day ; some landmark seem'd to be, or sign of sundry way." Lightly leaping backward, Arthur avoided the blow ; then he returned fiercely to the attack, "as a falcon fair, that once hath fail'd of her souse full near, remounts again into the open air, and unto better fortune doth herself prepare." The Prince pierced Maleger's breast, "that half the steel behind his back doth rest," and, drawing back the blade, looked—but looked in vain—for the life-blood to flow, or the dead corpse to fall. Again the astonished Arthur struck him quite through both the sides, but with no more effect.

Thereat he smitten was with great affright, And trembling terror did his heart appal ; Nor wist he what to think of that same sight, Nor what to say, nor what to do at all : He doubted lest it were some magical Illusion that did beguile his sense, Or wand'ring ghost that wanted funeral, Or airy spirit under false pretence, Or hellish fiend rais'd up through devilish science.

His wonder far exceeded reason's reach, That he began to doubt his dazzled sight, And oft of error did himself approach :¹ Flesh without blood, a person without sprite, Wounds without hurt, a body without might, That could do harm, yet could not harm'd be, That could not die, yet seem'd a mortal wight, That was most strong in most infirmity ; Like did he never hear, like did he never see.

Throwing away his own good sword Mordure, that never failed at need till now, and his useless shield, Arthur seized Maleger in his arms, "and crush'd the carcase so against his breast," as to squeeze out the idle breath ; then he cast "the lumpish corse unto the senseless ground," with such force that it rebounded aloft.

As when Jove's harness-bearing² bird from high Stoops at a flying heron with proud disdain, The stone-dead quarry³ falls so forcibly, That it rebounds against the lowly plain, A second fall redoubling back again. Then thought the Prince all peril sure was past, And that he victor only did remain ; No sooner thought, than that the carl as fast Can heap huge strokes on him, as ere he down was cast.

Arthur waxed nigh his wits' end ; but He then remember'd well, that had been said, How th' Earth his mother was, and first him bore ; She eke, so often as his life decay'd, Did life with usury to him restore, And rais'd him up much stronger than before, So soon as he unto her womb did fall :

¹ Impeach, accuse.² Armour-bearing.³ Prey.⁴ It was thus that Hercules destroyed the giant Antæus, who received fresh life and strength so soon

Therefore to ground he would him cast no more, Nor him commit to grave terrestrial, But bare him far from hope of succour usual.⁴

Then up he caught him 'twixt his puissant hands, And having scrus'd⁵ out of his carrion corse The loathful life, now loos'd from sinful bands, Upon his shoulders carried him perforce Above three furlongs, taking his full course, Until he came unto a standing lake ; Him thereinto he threw without remorse, Nor stirr'd, till hope of life did him forsake : So end of that carl's days and his own pains did make.

Which when those wicked hags from far did spy, Like to mad dogs they ran about the lands ; And th' one of them, with dreadful yelling cry, Throwing away her broken chains and bands, And having quench'd her burning fier-brands, Headlong herself did cast into that lake : But Impotence with her own wilful hands One of Maleger's curs'd darts did take, So riv'd⁶ her trembling heart, and wicked end did make.

Faint with loss of blood, the conqueror was set on his steed by his squire, and brought to the castle, where many grooms and squires were ready to aid him ; "and eke the fairest Alma met him there, with balm, and wine, and costly spicery, to comfort him in his infirmity." She caused her deliverer to be laid in sumptuous bed, "and, all the while his wounds were dressing, by him stay'd."

CANTO XII.

*Guyon, by Palmer's governance,
Passing through perils great,
Doth overthrow the Bower of Bliss,
And Acrasy defeat.*

GUYON, the Champion of Temperance, meanwhile approached the point of his adventure. He had sailed two days, after leaving the House of Alma, without beholding land, or living wight, or aught save peril. On the third morn they heard far off a hideous roaring, and saw the raging surges reared up to the skies. The boatman then urged the Palmer to steer aright and keep an even course : for on one side of the way by which they must pass was the Gulf of Greediness, "that deep engorgeth all this world's prey ;" and on the other side a hideous overhanging rock of magnet stone, threatening ruin to passengers, who are drawn helpless towards it as they shun the Gulf's devouring jaws.

Forward they pass, and strongly he them rows, Until they nigh unto that Gulf arrive,

as he touched the ground, and whom the hero at last vanquished by raising him aloft and squeezing him to death in his arms.

⁵ Pressed.⁶ Pierced.

Where stream more violent and greedy grows :
Then he with all his puissance doth strive
To strike his oars, and mightily doth drive
The hollow vessel through the threatful wave ;
Which, gaping wide to swallow them alive
In th' huge abyss of his engulfing grave,
Doth roar at them in vain, and with great
terror rave.

They, passing by, that grisly¹ mouth did see
Sucking the seas into his entrails deep,
That seem'd more horrible than hell to be,
Or that dark dreadful hole of Tartarus steep
Through which the damn'd ghosts do often creep
Back to the world, bad livers to torment :
But naught that falls into this direful deep,
Nor that approacheth nigh the wide descent,
May back return, but is condemn'd to be drent.²

On th' other side they saw that perilous rock,
Threat'ning itself on them to ruinate,³
On whose sharp cliffs the ribs of vessels broke,
And shiver'd ships which had been wreck'd late,
Yet stuck, with carcasses exanimate⁴
Of such as, having all their substance spent
In wanton joys and lusts intemperate,
Did afterward make shipwreck violent
Both of their life and fame, for ever foully blent.⁵

Forthy⁶ this hight the Rock of vile Reproach,
A dangerous and détestable place,
To which nor fish nor fowl did once approach,
But yelling mews, with sea-gulls hoarse and
base,

And cormorants, with birds of ravenous race,
Which still sat waiting on that wasteful clift
For spoil of wretches whose unhappy case,
After lost credit and consum'd thrift,
At last them driven hath to this despairful⁷
drift.

So forth they row'd ; and that ferryman
With his stiff oars did brush the sea so strong,
That the hoar waters from his frigate ran,
And the light bubbles danc'd all along,
While the salt brine out of the billows sprung.
At last far off they many islands spy
On ev'ry side floating the floods among :
Then said the Knight : " Lo ! I the land desory ;
Therefore, old Sire, thy course do thereunto
apply."

That, the ferryman answered, would be ruin ;
for these were the Wandering Islands, which
had often drawn many an unwary wight into
most deadly danger :

" Yet well they seem to him, that far doth view,
Both fair and fruitful, and the ground dispread
With grassy green of délectable hue ;
And the tall trees with leaves apparell'd
Are deck'd with blossoms dy'd in white and red,
That might the passengers thereto allure ;
But whosoever once hath fasten'd

His foot thereon, may never it recure,⁸
But wand'reth evermore uncertain and unsure :

As the isle of Delos "amid the Ægean Sea
long time did stray," till Latona, flying from
Juno's wrath, was there delivered of her fair
twins (Diana and Apollo) "which afterward
did rule the night and day." They hearkened
to the ferryman's warning ; and soon, passing
one of the islands, "upon the bank they sitting
did espy a dainty damsel dressing of her hair,
by whom a little skipper⁹ floating did appear.

She, them espying, loud to them gan call,
Bidding them nigher draw unto the shore,
For she had cause to busy them withal ;
And therewith loudly laugh'd : but nathemore
Would they once turn, but kept on as afore :
Which when she saw, she left her locks un-
dight,¹⁰

And, running to her boat, withouten oar
From the departing land it launch'd light,
And after them did drive with all her power
and might.

Whom overtaking, she in merry sort
Them gan to bord,¹¹ and purpose¹² diversely ;
Now feigning dalliance and wanton sport,
Now throwing forth lewd words immodestly ;
Till that the Palmer gan full bitterly
Her to rebuke for being loose and light :
Which not abiding, but more scornfully
Scoffing at him that did her justly wite,¹³
She turn'd her boat about, and from them row'd
quite.

"That was the wanton Phædria, which late
did ferry him over the Idle Lake." The wary
boatman now informed them that in front lay
a perilous passage, "where many mermaids
haunt, making false melodies ;" and by the
way there were a great quicksand and a whirl-
pool of hidden jeopardy, between which the
way was very narrow. Scarce had he spoken,
when "by the check'd wave" they discerned
"the Quicksand of Unthrifthead."

They, passing by, a goodly ship did see
Laden from far with precious merchandise,
And bravely furnish'd as ship might be,
Which through great disadvantage, or misprize,¹⁴
Herself had run into that hazardise ;¹⁵
Whose mariners and merchants with much toil
Labour'd in vain to have recur'd¹⁶ their prize,
And the rich wares to save from piteous spoil ;
But neither toil nor travail might her back
recoil.

On th' other side they see that perilous pool,
That call'd was the Whirlpool of Decay ;
In which full many had with hapless dool¹⁷
Been sunk, of whom no memory did stay :
Whose circled waters, rapt with whirling sway,
Like to a restless wheel, still running round,
Did covet, as they pass'd by that way,

¹ Terrible.² Drowned, sunk.⁴ Lifeless.⁶ Therefore.⁸ Recover.³ Fall in ruins.⁵ Disgraced.⁷ Desperate.⁹ Shiplet, skiff.¹⁰ Undressed, unbound.¹² Speak.¹⁴ Mistake ; French, "méprise."¹⁵ Hazard.¹⁷ Dole, distress.¹¹ Accost.¹³ Blame.¹⁶ Recovered, saved.

To draw their boat within the utmost bound
Of his wide labyrinth, and then to have them
drown'd.

Passing in safety, "sudden they see from
midst of all the main the surging waters like
a mountain rise."

The waves come rolling, and the billows roar
Outrageously, as they enrag'd were,
Or wrathful Neptune did them drive before
His whirling chariot for exceeding fear;
For not one puff of wind there did appear;
That all the three thereat wox ¹ much afraid,
Unweeting ² what such horror strange did rear.³
Eftsoons they saw a hideous host array'd
Of huge sea-monsters, such as living sense dis-
may'd:

Most ugly shapes and horrible aspects,
Such as Dame Nature's self might fear to see,
Or shame ⁴ that ever should so foul defects
From her most cunning hand escap'd be;
All dreadful portraits of deformity:
Spring-headed hydras;⁵ and sea-should'ring
whales;

Great whirlpools,⁶ which all fishes make to flee;
Bright scolopendras,⁷ arm'd with silver scales;
Mighty monoceros⁸ with unmeasur'd tails;

The dreadful fish, that hath deserv'd the name
Of Death, and like him looks in dreadful hue;⁹
The grisly wasserman,¹⁰ that makes his game
The flying ship with swiftness to pursue;
The horrible sea-satyr, that doth shew
His fearful face in time of greatest storm;
Huge siffus,¹¹ whom mariners eschew
No less than rocks, as travellers inform;
And greedy rosmarines¹² with visages deform:

All these, and thousand thousands many more,
And more deform'd monsters thousand fold,
With dreadful noise and hollow rumbling roar
Came rushing, in the foamy waves enroll'd,
Which seem'd to fly for fear them to behold:
No wonder, if these did the Knight appal;
For all that here on earth we dreadful hold,
Be but as bugs¹³ to fearen¹⁴ babes withal,
Compar'd to the creatures in the sea's entrall.¹⁵

The Palmer counselled them to fear nothing,
for these were only shapes sent by the witch
Acrasia to deter them from proceeding; then
he smote and calmed the sea with his virtuous
staff, "and all that dreadful army fast gan fly
into great Tethys' bosom, where they hidden
lie." Soon they heard a rueful cry of wailing
and weeping, and saw a seemly maiden, sitting
by the shore, who appeared to lament some

great misfortune, and called aloud to them for
succour. Guyon wished to steer towards her,
but the Palmer refused; telling him that hers
was no real distress, "but only womanish
fine forgery," meant to entangle him in ruin.

And now they nigh approach'd to the stead¹⁶
Where as those mermaids dwelt: it was a still
And calmy bay, on th' one side shelter'd
With the broad shadow of a hoary hill;
On th' other side a high rock tower'd still,
That 'twixt them both a pleasant port they made,
And did like a half theatre fulfil:¹⁷
There those five Sisters had continual trade,¹⁸
And us'd to bathe themselves in that deceitful
shade.

They were fair ladies, till they fondly striv'd
With th' Heliconian maids for mastery;¹⁹
Of whom they, over-comen, were depriv'd
Of their proud beauty, and th' one moiety
Transform'd to fish for their bold surquedry;²⁰
But th' upper half their hue²¹ retain'd still,
And their sweet skill in wonted melody;
Which ever after they abus'd to ill,
T' allure weak travellers, whom, gotten, they
did kill.

So now to Guyon, as he pass'd by,
Their pleasant tunes they sweetly thus applied;
"O thou fair son of gentle Faëry,
That art in mighty arms most magnified
Above all knights that ever battle tried,
O turn thy rudder hitherward a while!
Here may thy storm-beat vessel safely ride;
This is the port of rest from troublous toil,
The world's sweet inn from pain and wearisome
turmoil."

With that the rolling sea, resounding soft,
In his big base them fitly answer'd;
And on the rock the waves breaking aloft
A solemn mean²² unto them measur'd;
The while sweet Zephyrus loud whistel'd
His treble, a strange kind of harmony;
Which Guyon's senses softly tickel'd,
That he the boatman bade row easily,
And let him hear some part of their rare melody.

He was dissuaded from that vanity by the
Palmer; and soon they descried the land they
sought; when suddenly a gross fog overspread
with his dull vapour all that desert, and made
the universe seem but one confused mass. They
were greatly dismayed, nor knew how to steer,
when all at once an innumerable multitude of
harmful birds came fluttering and crying about
them, smiting them with their wicked wings,

¹ Grew.

² Raise, cause.

³ Ignorant.

⁴ Be ashamed.

⁵ As soon as one head of the fabulous Hydra was cut off, two sprang forth; and Spenser would seem to apply the epithet "spring-headed," from the notion that the monster had a "spring" or fountain of heads.

⁶ Huge fish of any kind, which produce the eddying effect of a whirlpool in their motion through the water.

⁷ The sea-scolopendra, a fish mentioned by Aristotle, which resembled the milliped.

⁸ Unicorns, or sword-fish; creatures with one horn

—Greek, *μῦς*, single, and *κερας*, a horn.

⁹ The Morsk, or walrus (Latin, "Mors," death).

¹⁰ The "wasserman," or merman; a fabulous being, like the sea-satyr mentioned just below.

¹¹ The sword-fish (xiphias).

¹² Sea-horses; German, "Ross," a horse. Another explanation derives the name from Latin "ros," dew, and makes the rosmarine an animal which fed upon the dew on the rocks.

¹³ Bugbears.

¹⁴ Frighten.

¹⁵ Entrails, depths.

¹⁶ Place.

¹⁷ Complete, form, an amphitheatre.

¹⁸ Resort.

¹⁹ See note 6, page 61.

²⁰ Presumption.

²¹ Former or natural aspect.

²² Tenor.

and sore annoying them as they groped in that grisly night.

Ev'n all the nation of unfortunate
And fatal birds about them flock'd were,
Such as by nature men abhor and hate ;
The ill-fac'd owl, death's dreadful messenger ;
The hoarse night-raven, trump of doleful drear ;¹
The leather-wing'd bat, day's enemy ;
The rueful screech,² still waiting on the bier ;
The whistler shrill, that whose hears doth die ;
The hellish harpies, prophets of sad destiny :

All these, and all others that did horror breed,
flew about them, filling their sails with fear ;
but still the voyagers pressed on, till the weather
cleared, and the destined land began to show
itself. Soon the Knight and the Palmer quitted
the nimble boat, by which the ferryman re-
mained ; and they marched fairly forth, afraid
of naught. " Ere long they heard a hideous
bellowing of many beasts ;" and by and by they
confronted the horrid crowd, gaping greedily,
with upstaring crests, to devour the unexpected
guests. But the beasts were swiftly cowed into
abject submission and fear by a fresh uplifting
of the Palmer's " virtuous staff," that could all
charms defeat.

Of that same wood it fram'd was cunningly,
Of which Caducæus whilôm was made,
Caducæus, the rod of Mercury,
With which he wonts³ the Stygian realms invade
Through ghastly horror and eternal shade ;
Th' infernal fiends with it he can assuage,
And Orcus tame, whom nothing can persuade,
And rule the Furies when they most do rage :
Such virtue in his staff had eke this Palmer sage.

Thence passing forth, they shortly do arrive
Where as the Bower of Bliss was situate ;
A place pick'd out by choice of best alive
That nature's work by art can imitate :
In which whatever in this worldly state
Is sweet and pleasing unto living sense,
Or that may daintest fantasy aggrate,⁴
Was pour'd forth with plentiful dispençe,⁵
And made there to abound with lavish affluence.

Goodly it was enclosed round about,
As well their enter'd guests to keep within,
As those unruly beasts to hold without ;
Yet was the fence thereof but weak and thin ;
Naught fear'd their force that fortilage⁶ to win,
But Wisdom's pow'r, and Temperance's might,
By which the mightiest things efforc'd bin :⁷
And eke the gate was wrought of substance light,
Rather for pleasure than for battery or fight.

It fram'd was of precious ivory,

¹ Sorrow.

² Screech-owl, an omen of death.

³ Is accustomed.

⁴ Gratify the most delicate fancy.

⁵ Outlay, lavishness.

⁶ Fortalice or fortress ; the meaning is, that those within the Bower had no fear that any would win the place by force—all coming to it gladly and eagerly—but Wisdom and Temperance.

⁷ Are conquered, forced.

⁸ Fleeted, fled.

⁹ Castle, or ship ; " piece " signifies generally any structure made by the piecing or fitting together of parts.

¹⁰ Froth, seethe.

That seem'd a work of admirable wit ;
And therein all the famous history
Of Jason and Medea was y-writ ;
Her mighty charms, her furious loving fit ;
His goodly conquest of the golden fleece ;
His fals'd faith, and love too lightly flit ;⁸
The wonder'd Argo, which in venturous piece⁹
First through the Euxine seas bore all the flow'r
of Greece.

Ye might have seen the frothy billows fry¹⁰
Under the ship as thorough them she went,
That seem'd the waves were into ivory,
Or ivory into the waves were sent ;
And otherwhere the snowy substance sprent¹¹
With vermeil,¹² like the boy's blood therein
shed,¹³

A piteous spectacle did represent ;
And otherwhiles, with gold besprinkel'd,
It seem'd th' enchanted flame, which did Cræusa
wed.¹⁴

All this and more might in that goodly gate
Be read,¹⁵ that ever open stood to all
Which thither came : but in the porch there sate
A comely personage of stature tall
And semblance pleasing, more than natural,
That travellers to him seem'd to entice ;
His looser garment to the ground did fall,
And flew about his heels in wanton wise,
Not fit for speedy pace or manly exercise.

They in that place him Genius did call :—
Not that celestial Power, to whom the care
Of life, and generation of all
That lives, pertains in charge particular,
Who wondrous things concerning our welfare,
And strange phantoms, doth let us oft foresee,
And oft of secret ills bids us beware :
That is our Self, whom though we do not see,
Yet each doth in himself it well perceive to be :

Therefore a god him sage Antiquity
Did wisely make, and good Agdistes call :
But this same was to that quite contrary,
The foe of life, that good envies to all,
That secretly doth us procure to fall¹⁶
Through guileful semblants,¹⁷ which he makes
us see :

He of this garden had the governa¹⁸,
And Pleasure's porter was devis'd to be,
Holding a staff in hand for more formality.

With diverse flowers he daintily was deck'd,
And strow'd round about ; and by his side
A mighty mazer¹⁹ bowl of wine was set,
As if it had to him been sacrificed ;
Wherewith all new-come guests he gratified :
So did he eke Sir Guyon passing by ;
But he his idle courtesy defied,²⁰

¹¹ Sprinkled.

¹² Vermilion.

¹³ The blood of Absyrtus, brother of Medea, whom she killed and threw in her father's way, to delay the pursuers, when she fled with Jason from Colchis.

¹⁴ Jason having proved unfaithful to Medea, and taken to wife Cræusa, daughter of Creon, the king of Corinth, Medea sent to her supplanter an enchanted or poisoned garment, which consumed the wearer like a flame.

¹⁵ Seen, discerned.

¹⁶ Doth conspire, contrive, to make us fall.

¹⁷ Appearances, fancies.

¹⁸ Government.

¹⁹ Maple.

²⁰ Contemned.

And overthrew his bowl disdainfully,
And broke his staff, with which he charm'd¹
semblants sly.²

Thus being enter'd, they behold around
A large and spacious plain, on ev'ry side
Strow'd with pleasance;³ whose fair grassy
ground

Mantled with green, and goodly beautified
With all the ornaments of Flora's pride,
Wherewith her mother Art, as half in scorn
Of niggard Nature, like a pompous bride
Did deck her, and too lavishly adorn,
When forth from virgin bow'r she comes in th'
early morn.

Thereto the heavens, always jovial,
Look'd on them lovely, still in steadfast state,
Nor suffer'd storm nor frost on them to fall,
Their tender buds or leaves to violate;
Nor scorching heat, nor cold intemperate,
To afflict the creatures which therein did dwell;
But the mild air with season moderate
Gently attemper'd and dispos'd so well,
That still it breath'd forth sweet spirit⁴ and
wholesome smell:

More sweet and wholesome than the pleasant hill
Of Rhodopé, on which the nymph, that bore
A giant babe, herself for grief did kill;
Or the Thessalian Tempé, where of yore
Fair Daphne Phoebus' heart with love did gore;⁵
Or Ida, where the gods lov'd to repair,⁶
Whenever they their heav'nly bow'rs forlore;⁷
Or sweet Parnass', the haunt of Muses fair;
Or Eden self, if aught with Eden might compare.

Much wonder'd Guyon at the fair aspect
Of that sweet place, yet suffer'd no delight
To sink into his sense, nor mind affect;
But pass'd forth, and look'd still forward right,
Bridling his will and mastering his might:
Till that he came unto another gate:
No gate, but like one, being goodly dight⁸
With boughs and branches, which did broad
dilate

Their clasping arms in wanton wreathings intri-
cate:

So fashion'd a porch with rare device,
Arch'd over head with an embracing vine,
Whose bunches hanging down seem'd to entice
All passers-by to taste their luscious wine,
And did themselves into their hands incline,
As freely off'ring to be gather'd;
Some deep empurpled as the hyacine,⁹
Some as the ruby laughing sweetly red,
Some like fair emeralds, not yet well ripen'd:

And them amongst some were of burnish'd gold,
So made by art to beautify the rest,
Which did themselves amongst the leaves enfold,
As lurking from the view of covetous guest,
That the weak boughs with so rich load oppress'd
Did bow adown as overburden'd.

Under that porch a comely dame did rest,
Clad in fair weeds, but foul disorder'd,
And garments loose that seem'd unmeet for
womanhead:

In her left hand a cup of gold she held,
And with her right the riper fruit did reach,
Whose sappy liquor, that with fulness swell'd,
Into her cup she scrud¹⁰ with dainty breach¹¹
Of her fine fingers, without foul empeach,¹²
That so fair winepress made the wine more sweet:
Thereof she us'd to give to drink to each
Whom passing by she happen'd to meet:
It was her guise all strangers goodly so to greet.

So she to Guyon offer'd it to tast;¹³
Who, taking it out of her tender hand,
The cup to ground did violently cast,
That all in pieces it was broken fand,¹⁴
And with the liquor stain'd all the land:
Whereat Excess exceedingly was wroth,
Yet n'ot¹⁵ the same amend, nor yet withstand,
But suffer'd him to pass, all¹⁶ were she loth;
Who, naught regarding her displeasure, forward
go'th.

There the most dainty paradise on ground
Itself doth offer to his sober eye,
In which all pleasures plenteously abound,
And none does other's happiness envy;
The painted flow'rs; the trees upshooting high;
The dales for shade; the hills for breathing space;
The trembling groves; the crystal running by;
And, that which all fair works doth most
aggrace,¹⁷

The art, which all that wrought, appear'd in
no place.¹⁸

One would have thought (so cunningly the rude
And scorn'd parts were mingled with the fine),
That Nature had for wantonness ensued¹⁹
Art, and that Art at Nature did repine;
So, striving each th' other to undermine,
Each did the other's work more beautify;
So diff'ring both in wills, agreed in fine:²⁰
So all agreed, through sweet diversity,
This garden to adorn with all variety.

And in the midst of all a fountain stood,
Of richest substance that on earth might be,
So pure and shiny that the silver flood
Through every channel running one might see;
Most goodly it with curious imagery
Was over-wrought, and shapes of naked boys,
Of which some seem'd with lively jollity
To fly about, playing their wanton toys,²¹
Whilst others did themselves embay²² in liquid
joys.

And over all, of purest gold, was spread
A trail of ivy in his native hue;
For the rich metal was so colour'd,
That wight, who did not well advis'd²³ it view,
Would surely deem it to be ivy true:
Low his lascivious arms adown did creep,

¹ Conjured up. ² Skillful, cunning, apparitions.

³ Objects inspiring pleasure. ⁴ Breath.

⁵ Pierced. ⁶ See note 2, page 388.

⁷ Forsook. ⁸ Adorned.

⁹ Hyacinth. ¹⁰ Squeezed.

¹¹ Pressure, fracture. ¹² Injury.

¹³ Taste.

¹⁴ Found.

¹⁵ Could not.

¹⁶ Although.

¹⁷ Grace, make pleasing.

¹⁸ A paraphrase of the maxim, "Artem celare artem"
—the true art lies in concealing art.

¹⁹ Followed.

²⁰ In end or aim.

²¹ Sports.

²² Bathe, delight.

²³ Closely, attentively.

That, themselves dipping in the silver dew,
Their fleecy flow'rs they fearfully did steep,
Which drops of crystal seem'd for wantonness
to weep.

Infinite streams continually did well
Out of this fountain, sweet and fair to see,
The which into an ample laver fell,
And shortly grew to so great quantity,
That like a little lake it seem'd to be ;
Whose depth exceeded not three cubits' height,
That through the waves one might the bottom
see,
All pav'd beneath with jasper shining bright,
That seem'd the fountain in that sea did sail
upright.

And all the margent¹ round about was set
With shady laurel trees, thence to defend
The sunny beams which on the billows bet,²
And those which therein bathed might offend.
As Guyon happen'd by the same to wend,³
Two naked damsels he therein espied,
Which therein bathing seem'd to contend
And wrestle wantonly, nor car'd to hide
Their dainty parts from view of any which
them ey'd.

Sometimes the one would lift the other quite
Above the waters, and then down again
Her plunge, as over-master'd by might,
Where both a while would cover'd remain,
And each the other from to rise⁴ restrain ;
The while their snowy limbs, as through a veil,
So through the crystal waves appear'd plain :
Then suddenly both would themselves unhele,⁵
And th' amorous sweet spoils to greedy eyes
reveal.

As that fair star, the messenger of morn,
His dewy face out of the sea doth rear :
Or as the Cyprian goddess, newly born
Of th' ocean's fruitful froth,⁶ did first appear :
Such seem'd they, and so their yellow hair
Crystalline humour⁷ dropp'd down apace.
Whom such when Guyon saw, he drew him near,
And somewhat gan relent⁸ his earnest pace ;
His stubborn breast gan secret pleasure to
embrace.

The wanton maidens, him espying, stood
Gazing a while at his unwonted guise ;⁹
Then th' one herself low duck'd in the flood,
Abash'd that her a stranger did advise :¹⁰
But th' other rather higher did arise,
And her two lily paps aloft display'd,
And all, that might his melting heart entice
To her delights, she unto him bewray'd ;
The rest, hid underneath, him more desirous
made.

With that the other likewise up arose,
And her fair locks, which formerly were bound
Up in one knot, she low adown did loose,

Which, flowing long and thick, her cloth'd
around,

And th' ivory in golden mantle gown'd :¹¹
So that fair spectacle from him was reft,
Yet that which reft it no less fair was found :
So, hid in locks and waves from looker's theft,
Naught but her lovely face she for his looking
left.

Withal she laugh'd, and she blush'd withal,
That blushing to her laughter gave more grace,
And laughter to her blushing, as did fall.¹²
Now when they spied the Knight to slack his
pace,
Them to behold, and in his sparkling face
The secret signs of kindled lust appear,
Their wanton merriments they did increase,
And to him beckon'd to approach more near,
And show'd him many sights that courage cold
could rear :¹³

On which when gazing him the Palmer saw,
He much rebuk'd those wand'ring eyes of his,
And, counsell'd well, him forward thence did
draw.

Now are they come nigh to the Bower of Bliss,
Of her fond¹⁴ favourites so nam'd amiss ;
When thus the Palmer ; " Now, Sir, well advise ;⁵
For here the end of all our travail is :
Here wons¹⁶ Acrasia, whom we must surprise,
Else she will slip away, and all our drift
despise."

Eftsoons they heard a most melodious sound
Of all that might delight a dainty ear,
Such as at once might not on living ground,
Save in this paradise, be heard elsewhere :
Right hard it was for wight which did it hear
To read¹⁷ what manner music that might be ;
For all that pleasing is to living ear
Was there consorted in one harmony ;
Birds, voices, instruments, winds, waters, all
agree :

The joyous birds, shrouded in cheerful shade,
Their notes unto the voice attemper'd sweet ;
Th' angelical soft trembling voices made
To th' instruments divine response meet ;
The silver-sounding instruments did meet
With the base murmur of the waters' fall ;
The waters' fall with difference discreet,
Now soft, now loud, unto the wind did call ;
The gentle warbling wind low answer'd to all.

There, whence that music seem'd heard to be,
Was the fair Witch herself now solacing
With a new lover, whom through sorcery
And witchcraft she from far did thither bring :
There she had him now laid a-lumbering
In secret shade after long wanton joys ;
Whilst round about them pleasantly did sing
Many fair ladies and lascivious boys,
That ever mix'd their song with light licentious
toys.¹⁸

¹ Margin, edge. ² Beat.
³ Go. ⁴ From rising.
⁵ Uncover, display ; from Anglo-Saxon "hyllan," to
cover, hide. ⁶ Venus Anadyomene.
⁷ Moisture. ⁸ Slacken.

⁹ Aspect. ¹⁰ Gaze upon, observe.
¹¹ Robed. ¹² Chance, happen.
¹³ Inspire. ¹⁴ Foolish.
¹⁵ Be well on your guard. ¹⁶ Dwells.
¹⁷ Tell. ¹⁸ Toyings, amorous sports.

And all that while right over him she hung,
With her false eyes fast fix'd in his sight,¹
As seeking medicine whence she was stung,
Or greedily depasturing delight ;
And oft inclining down, with kisses light,
For fear of waking him, his lips bedew'd,
And through his humid eyes did suck his sprite,
Quite molten into lust and pleasure lewd ;
Wherewith she sigh'd soft, as if his case she
rued.²

The while some one did chant this lovely lay ;
" Ah ! see, whose fair thing dost fain to see,
In springing flow'r the image of thy day !³
Ah ! see the virgin rose, how sweetly she
Doth first peep forth with bashful modesty,
That fairer seems the less ye see her may !
Lo ! see soon after how more bold and free
Her bar'd bosom she doth broad display ;
Lo ! see soon after how she fades and falls away !

So passeth, in the passing of a day,
Of mortal life the leaf, the bud, the flow'r ;
Nor more doth flourish after first decay,
That erst was sought to deck both bed and bow'r
Of many a lady, and many a paramour !
Gather therefore the rose whilst yet is prime,
For soon comes age that will her pride deflow'r :
Gather the rose of love whilst yet is time,
Whilst loving thou may'st lov'd be with equal
crime." ⁴

He ceas'd ; and then gan all the choir of birds
Their diverse notes t' attune unto his lay,
As in approvance of his pleasing words.
The constant⁵ pair heard all that he did say,
Yet swerv'd not, but kept their forward way
Through many covert groves and thickets close,
In which they creeping did at last display⁶
That wanton Lady, with her lover loose,
Whose sleepy head she in her lap did soft dispose.

Upon a bed of roses she was laid,
As faint through heat, or dight⁷ to pleasant sin ;
And was array'd, or rather disarray'd,
All in a veil of silk and silver thin,
That hid no whit her alabaster skin,
But rather shew'd more white, if more might be :
More subtle web Arachne cannot spin ;
Nor the fine nets,⁸ which oft we woven see
Of scorched dew, do not in th' air more lightly
flee.

Her snowy breast was bare to ready spoil
Of hungry eyes, which n'ot⁹ therewith be fill'd ;
And yet, through languor of her late sweet toil,
Few drops, more clear than nectar, forth distill'd,
That like pure orient pearls adown it trill'd ;¹⁰
And her fair eyes, sweet smiling in delight,
Moisten'd their fiery beams, with which she
thrill'd

Frail hearts, yet quenched not ; like starry light,
Which, sparkling on the silent waves, does seem
more bright.

¹ Fixed on his face. ² Pity'd. ³ Life.
⁴ With equal fault—if fault it be ; or, with equal
occasion for love to that which thou thyself givest.
⁵ Resolute, steadfast. ⁶ Discover.
⁷ Prepared.
⁸ The gossamer web.

The young man sleeping by her seem'd to be
Some goodly swain of honourable place ;¹¹
That certes it great pity was to see
Him his nobility so foul deface :¹²
A sweet regard and amiable grace,
Mix'd with manly sternness, did appear,
Yet sleeping, in his well-proportion'd face ;
And on his tender lips the downy hair
Did now but freshly spring, and silken blossoms
bear.

His warlike arms, the idle instruments
Of sleeping praise, were hung upon a tree ;
And his brave shield, full of old monuments,¹³
Was foully ras'd,¹⁴ that none the signs might see ;
Nor for them, nor for honour, car'd he,
Nor aught that did to his advancement tend ;
But in lewd loves, and wasteful luxury,
His days, his goods, his body he did spend :
O horrible enchantment, that him so did blend !¹⁵

The noble Elf and careful Palmer drew
So nigh them, minding naught but lustful game,
That sudden forth they on them rush'd, and
threw

A subtle net, which only for that same
The skilful Palmer formally¹⁶ did frame :
So held them under fast ; the while the rest
Fled all away for fear of fouler shame.
The fair enchantress, so unwares oppress,
Tried all her arts and all her sleights thence
out to wrest ;¹⁷

And eke her lover strove ; but all in vain :
For that same net so cunningly was wound,
That neither guile nor force might it distract.¹⁸
They took them both, and both them strongly
bound

In captive bands, which there they ready found :
But her in chains of adamant he tied ;
For nothing else might keep her safe and sound :
But Verdant (so he hight) he soon untied,
And counsel sage in stead thereof to him applied.

But all those pleasant bow'rs, and palace brave,
Guyon broke down with rigour pitiless :
Nor aught their goodly workmanship might save
Them from the tempest of his wrathfulness,
But that their bliss he turn'd to balefulness ;
Their groves he fell'd ; their gardens did deface ;
Their arbours spoil ; their cabinets suppress ;
Their banquet-houses burn ; their buildings rase ;
And of the fairest late now made the foulest
place.

Then led they her away, and eke that knight
They with them led, both sorrowful and sad :
The way they came, the same return'd they right,
Till they arriv'd where they lately had
Charm'd those wild beasts that rag'd with fury
mad ;

Which, now awaking, fierce at them gan fly,
As in their mistress' rescue, whom they lad ;¹⁹

⁹ Could not. ¹⁰ Trickled.
¹¹ Rank. ¹² Disgrace.
¹³ Memorials. ¹⁴ Erased.
¹⁵ Blind, deceive. ¹⁶ Expressly, carefully.
¹⁷ Escape, wrench herself away.
¹⁸ Rend. ¹⁹ Led.

But them the Palmer soon did pacify.
Then Guyon ask'd, what meant those beasts
which there did lie.

Said he; "These seeming beasts are men in deed,
Whom this enchantress hath transform'd thus;
Whilom her lovers, which her lusts did feed,
Now turn'd into figures hideous,
According to their minds like monstrous."
"Sad end," quoth he, "of life intemperate,
And mournful meed of joys delicious!
But, Palmer, if it might thee so aggrate,¹
Let them return'd be unto their former state."

Straightway he with his virtuous staff them
strook,
And straight of beasts they comely men became;
Yet, being men, they did unmanly look,

And star'd ghastly; some for inward shame,
And some for wrath to see their captive Dame:
But one above the rest in special,
That had a hog been late, hight Gryll by name,
Repin'd greatly, and did him miscall²
That had from hoggish form him brought to
natural.

Said Guyon; "See the mind of beastly man,
That hath so soon forgot the excellence
Of his creation, when he life began,
That now he chooseth, with vile difference,
To be a beast and lack intelligence!"
To whom the Palmer thus; "The dunghill kind
Delights in filth and foul incontinence:
Let Gryll be Gryll, and have his hoggish mind;
But let us hence depart, whilst weather serves
and wind."

THE THIRD BOOK
OF
THE FAERIE QUEEN:

CONTAINING

THE LEGEND OF BRITOMARTIS,³ OR OF
CHASTITY.

It falls me here to write of Chastity,
That fairest virtue, far above the rest:
For which what needs me fetch from Faëry
Foreign ensamples it to have exprest?
Since it is shrin'd in my Sov'reign's breast,
And form'd so lively in each perfect part,
That to all ladies, which have it profest,
Need but behold the portrait of her heart;
If portray'd it might be by any living art:

But living art may not least part express,
Nor life-resembling pencil it can paint:
All⁴ were it Zeuxis or Praxiteles,
His dædal⁵ hand would fail and greatly faint,
And her perfections with his error taint:
Nor poet's wit, that passeth painter far
In picturing the parts of beauty daint,⁶
So hard a workmanship adventure dare,
For fear through want of words her excellence
to mar.

How then shall I, apprentice of the skill
That whilom in divinest wits did reign,
Presume so high to stretch mine humble quill?
Yet now my luckless lot doth me constrain
Hereto perforce: but, O dread Sovereign!
Thus far forth pardon, since that choicest wit

¹ Please.

² Abuse, upraid.

³ Britomartis (compound of the Greek words *Βριτυ*, sweet, and *μαρτις*, a maiden) was the name of a Cretan nymph, whom Minos vainly pursued with his love; at last, to avoid him, she leaped into the sea, and was changed into a goddess by Artemis or Diana. In Crete, the two divinities came to be identified, and the title of Britomartis was sometimes applied to Diana. The fitness of the name for Spenser's purpose in this book, which is devoted to the fortunes of a chaste and martial

Cannot your glorious portrait figure plain,
That I in colour'd shows may shadow it,
And antique praises unto present persons fit.
But if in living colours, and right hue,
Thyself thou covet to see pictur'd,
Who can it do more lively or more true
Than that sweet verse, with nectar sprinkled,
In which a gracious servant⁷ pictur'd
His Cynthia, his heaven's fairest light?
That, with his melting sweetness ravish'd,
And with the wonder of her beams bright,
My senses lull'd are in slumber of delight.

But let that same delicious poet lend
A little leave unto a rustic Muse
To sing his Mistress' praise; and let him mend,
If aught amiss her liking may abuse:
Nor let his fairest Cynthia refuse
In mirrors more than one herself to see;
But either Gloriana let her choose,
Or in Belphebe fashion'd to be;
In th' one her rule, in th' other her rare chastity.

CANTO I.

*Guyon encount'reth Britomart:
Fair Florimell is chas'd:
Duessa's trains and Malecas-
ta's champions are defac'd.*

RECOVERED in the House of Temperance from
their fatigues and wounds, Prince Arthur and
Guyon took leave of the fair Alma, and went

British maiden, is obvious; and so is the opportunity,
which the poet does not neglect, of paying homage to
the Virgin Queen on her pre-eminence in a virtue by
which she set much store.

⁴ Although.

⁵ Skillful, cunning; from Greek, *δαίδαλλω*, I work
cunningly. Daedalus was the name given to the Cretan
artist who first separated the feet of his statues, to give
them the appearance of motion.

⁶ Delicate, exquisite.

⁷ Sir Walter Raleigh, in his poem of "Cynthia."

forth together; the captive Acrasia, under strong guard, having been sent to Faery Court by another road. After long dangerous travel and many hard adventures, they came to an open plain, where they spied a knight, attended by an aged squire; and the stranger addressed himself to battle, displaying his shield, "that bore a lion passant in a golden field." Beseeching the Prince "to let him run that turn," Guyon spurred against the stranger; the two met in furious encounter; the Faery Knight was unhorsed, and "nigh a spear's length behind his crupper fell," though uninjured.

Great shame and sorrow of that fall he took;¹ For never yet, since warlike arms he bore And shiv'ring spear in bloody field first shook, He found himself dishonoured so sore.

Ah! gentlest knight that ever armour bore, Let not thee grieve dismounted to have been, And brought to ground, that never wast before; For not thy fault, but secret pow'r unseen; That spear enchanted was which laid thee on the green!

But weenedst thou what wight thee overthrew, Much greater grief and shamefuller regret For thy hard fortune then thou wouldst renew, That of a single damsel thou wert met On equal plain, and there so hard beset: Even the famous Britomart that was, Whom strange adventure did from Britain fet.² To seek her lover (love far sought, alas!) Whose image she had seen in Venus' looking-glass.

The wrathful Guyon would have continued the fight on foot; but the Palmer warned him against braving the death that "sat on the point of that enchanted spear;" and the Prince added his dissuasions, laying the blame of the fall, not on the Knight's carriage, but on his swerving steed and the imperfect buckling of his furnitures. "Thus reconciliation was between them knit," and they rode forward all in company.

O goodly usage of those antique times! In which the sword was servant unto right; When not for malice and contentious crimes, But all for praise, and proof of manly might, The martial brood accustomed to fight: Then honour was the meed of victory, And yet the vanquished had no despite: Let later age that noble use envy, Vile rancour to avoid and cruel surquedry!³

Travelling long, they came to a wide forest, "whose hideous horror and sad trembling sound full grisly seem'd;" and there they rode long, finding no tracks but those of wild beasts.

All suddenly, out of the thickest brush, Upon a milk-white palfrey all alone, A goodly lady did foreby⁴ them rush,

¹ The overthrow of Sir Guyon in the unprovoked encounter with Britomart, is supposed to refer to the futile presumption of the Earl of Essex, in his ambitious thought to match himself with Queen Elizabeth.

² Fetch.

Whose face did seem as clear as crystal stone, And eke, through fear, as white as whale's bone: Her garments all were wrought of beaten gold, And all her steed with tinsel trappings shone, Which fled so fast that nothing might him hold, And scarce them leisure gave her passing to behold.

Still, as she fled, her eye she backward threw, As fearing evil that pursued her fast; And her fair yellow locks behind her flew, Loosely dispers'd with puff of every blast: All as a blazing star doth far outcast His hairy beams, and flaming locks disspread, At sight whereof the people stand aghast; But the sage wizard tells, as he has read,⁵ That it importunes⁶ death and doleful dreari-head.⁷

So as they gaz'd after her a while, Lo! where a grisly foster⁸ forth did rush, Breathing out beastly lust her to defile: His tireling jade⁹ he fiercely forth did push Through thick and thin, both over bank and bush,

In hope her to attain by hook or crook, That from his gory sides the blood did gush: Large were his limbs, and terrible his look, And in his clownish hand a sharp boar-spear he shook.

Seeing this outrage, the Knights instantly spurred after the lady, to rescue her; the "foul foster" was pursued by Timias (Prince Arthur's squire, whose name we now learn for the first time, and who is understood to represent Raleigh); while Britomart, after awaiting in vain for a certain space the return of the others, fearlessly held on her perilous way. At the issue from the wood, she spied a stately castle far away, and, on a fair green-mantled plain in front, six knights vehemently attacking one, who bravely resisted, so that none of them dared to attack him in front: Like dastard curs, that, having at a bay The salvage beast emboss'd¹⁰ in weary chase, Dare not adventure on the stubborn prey, Nor bite before, but roam from place to place To get a snatch when turn'd is his face. In such distress and doubtful jeopardy When Britomart him saw, she ran apace Unto his rescue, and with earnest cry Bade those same six forbear that single enemy.

The assailants paying no heed to her cry, Britomart pressed in, drove them off, and inquired the cause of strife. The single knight answered that the six would compel him to change his love, and love another dame; while he already loved "one, the truest one on ground," the Errant Damsel—for he is no other than the Redcross Knight.

"Certes," said she, "then be ye six to blame, To ween your wrong by force to justify:

³ Arrogance, presumptuous self-conceit.

⁴ Near.

⁵ Divined.

⁶ Imports, portends.

⁷ Calamity.

⁸ Forester.

⁹ Wearied horse.

¹⁰ Hard hunted, hunted down.

For knight to leave his lady were great shame,
That faithful is ; and better were to die.
All loss is less, and less the infamy,
Than loss of love to him that loves but one :
Nor may love be compell'd by mastery ;¹
For, soon as mastery comes, sweet love anon
Taketh his nimble wings, and soon away is
gone."²

One of the six explained that in the castle dwelt a lady of peerless beauty, who had ordained a law that every knight passing that way, if he had no lady or no love, should do her perpetual service ; and if he had a love, " then must he her forego with foul defame," or maintain by his sword—as the Redcross was doing—that she was fairer than their fairest Dame. Britomart, asked to declare if she had a love, replied that she had certainly a love, though no lady, and refused to do service to their mistress. Then she attacked them, and laid three on ground, while a fourth succumbed to the Knight ; the others, yielding themselves her liegemen, asked her " to enter in and reap the due reward" of their lady's favour. " Long were it to describe the goodly frame and stately port of Castle Joyous"—for so the pile was called—where the victors were brought into the presence of the Lady of Delight " through a chamber long and spacious."

But for to tell the sumptuous array
Of that great chamber should be labour lost ;
For living wit, I ween, cannot display
The royal riches and exceeding cost
Of ev'ry pillar and of ev'ry post,
Which all of purest bullion fram'd were,
And with great pearls and precious stones embost ;
That the bright glister of their beam's clear
Did sparkle forth great light, and glorious did appear.

The stranger knights, struck with wonder,
passed into an inner room far more richly royal :
The walls were round about apparell'd
With costly cloths of Arras and of Tour ;³
In which with cunning hand was portray'd
The love of Venus and her paramour,
The fair Adonis, turn'd to a flow'r ;
A work of rare device and wondrous wit.
First did it show the bitter baleful stowre⁴
Which her assay'd with many a fervent fit,
When first her tender heart was with his beauty smit :

Then with what sleights and sweet allurements
she
Entic'd the boy, as well that art she knew,

¹ Superior power, force.

² These lines are almost literally taken from Chaucer, who, near the opening of *The Franklin's Tale* (page 122), says—

" Love will not be constrain'd by mastery.
When mastery comes, the god of love anon
Beateth his wings, and, farewell, he is gone.
Love is a thing as any spirit free."

The same idea and image are reproduced by Pope in the *Epistle of Eloisa to Abelard*, lines 73-76 :

" How oft, when press'd to marriage, have I said,
Curse on all laws but those which love has made ?

And woo'd him her paramour to be ;
Now making garlands of each flow'r that grew,
To crown his golden locks with honour due ;
Now leading him into a secret shade
From his beauperes,⁵ and from bright heaven's
view,
Where him to sleep she gently would persuade,
Or bathe him in a fountain by some covert glade :

And, whilst he slept, she over him would spread
Her mantle colour'd like the starry skies,
And her soft arm lay underneath his head,
And with ambrosial kisses bathe his eyes ;
And, whilst he bath'd, with her two crafty spies⁶
She secretly would search each dainty limb,
And throw into the well sweet rosemaries,
And fragrant violets, and pansies trim ;
And ever with sweet nectar she did sprinkle him.

So did she steal his heedless heart away,
And joy'd his love in secret unespied :
But, for⁷ she saw him bent to cruel play,
To hunt the salvage beast in forest wide,
Dreadful of danger that might him betide,
She oft and oft advis'd him to refrain
From chase of greater beasts, whose brutish
pride
Might breed him scath unware : but all in vain ;
For who can shun the chance that destiny doth
ordain ?

Lo ! where beyond⁸ he lieth languishing,
Deadly engor'd⁹ of a great wild boar ;
And by his side the goddess grovelling
Makes for him endless moan, and evermore
With her soft garment wipes away the gore
Which stains his snowy skin with hateful hue :
But, when she saw no help might him restore,
Him to a dainty flow'r she did transmute,¹⁰
Which in that cloth was wrought, as if it lively¹¹
grew.

So was that chamber clad in goodly wise :
And round about it many beds were dight,¹²
As whilom was the antique world's guise,
Some for untimely ease, some for delight,
As pleas'd them to use that use it might :
And all was full of damsels and of squires,
Dancing and revelling both day and night,
And swimming deep in sensual desires ;
And Cupid still amongst them kindled lustful
fires.

And all the while sweet Music did divide
Her looser notes with Lydian harmony ;
And all the while sweet birds thereto applied
Their dainty lays and dulcet melody,
Aye carolling of love and jollity,
That wonder was to hear their trim consort.¹³

Love, free as air, at sight of human ties,
Spreads his light wings, and in a moment flies."

³ Tours, in France ; where, as at Arras, the manufacture of tapestries and silk stuffs had attained great excellence.

⁴ Passion, pain of love.

⁵ Companions, fair peers or equals in age ; like the Greek ἡλικες.

⁶ Her eyes.

⁷ Because.

⁸ Yonder.

⁹ Pierced, wounded.

¹⁰ He was transformed to an anemone.

¹¹ Living.

¹² Couches were arranged.

¹³ Pleasing concert.

Which when those knights beheld, with scorn-
ful eye
They sdeign'd¹ such lascivious disport,
And loath'd the loose demeanour of that wanton
sort.²

Thence they were brought to that great Lady's
view,
Whom they found sitting on a sumptuous bed
That glister'd all with gold and glorious shew,
As the proud Persian queens accusom'd:
She seem'd a woman of great bountihead³
And of rare beauty, saving that askance
Her wanton eyes (ill signs of womanhead)
Did roll too lightly, and too often glance,
Without regard of grace or comely ámenánee.⁴

Invited by the Lady, the Redcross Knight dis-
armed; but Britomart would only lift her visor.

As, when fair Cynthia, in darksome night,
Is in a noyous⁵ cloud envelop'd,
Where she may find the substance thin and light,
Breaks forth her silver beams, and her bright
head

Discovers to the world discomfited;⁶
Of the poor traveller that went astray
With thousand blessings she is heri'd:⁷
Such was the beauty and the shining ray,
With which fair Britomart gave light unto the
day.

And eke those six, which lately with her fought,
Now were disarm'd, and did themselves present
Unto her view and company unsought;
For they all seem'd courteous and gent,⁸
And all six brethren, born of one parént,
Which had them train'd in all civility,
And goodly taught to tilt and tournament;
Now were they liegemen to this Lady free,
And her knight's-service ought,⁹ to hold of her
in fee.

The first of them by name Gardanté hight,
A jolly person, and of comely view;
The second was Parlanté, a bold knight;
And next to him Jocanté did ensue;
Bascianté did himself most courteous shew;
But fierce Bacchanté seem'd too fell and keen;
And yet in arms Noctanté¹⁰ greater grew:
All were fair knights, and goodly well beseen;¹¹
But to fair Britomart they all but shadows been.

For she was full of amiable grace
And manly terror mix'd therewithal;
That, as the one stirr'd up affections base,
So th' other did men's rash desires appal,
And hold them back that would in error fall:
As he that hath espied a vermeil rose,
To which sharp thorns and briars the way fore-
stall,¹²

Dare not for dread his hardy hand expose,
But, wishing it far off, his idle wish doth lose.

¹ Disdain'd. ² Company. ³ Goodness.

⁴ Carriage, behaviour. ⁵ Gloomy, dismal.

⁶ Troubled, dejected (at her absence).

⁷ Honoured.

⁸ Gentle, noble.

⁹ Owed.

¹⁰ The names of the knights denote the stages in the
progress of light love; they mean the Ogler, the

Believing Britomart what she seemed, "a
fresh and lusty knight," the Lady grew greatly
enamoured, and soon burned in extreme desire;
recklessly bursting into terms of open outrage,
that plainly discovered her passionate nature—
"not to love, but lust, inclin'd." The crafty
glances of her false eyes aimed at the comely
guest's heart, "and told her meaning in her
countenance; but Britomart dissembled it with
ignorance." A sumptuous supper was served;
nothing lacked that was dainty and rare; "and
aye the cups their banks did overflow, and aye
between the cups" the Lady shot secret darts
at the unmoved Maiden Knight. Having again
vainly entreated Britomart to disarm, the Lady
began to show her desire more openly, "with
sighs, and sobs, and plaints, and piteous grief,
the outward sparks of her in-burning fire;" and
at last told her plainly, that if she did not show
some pity, and do her some comfort, she must
die. Britomart, credulously judging the other's
"strong extremity" by her own secret passion
—like a bird that, knowing not "the false
fowler's call, into his hidden net full easily
doth fall"—now entertained the Lady with fair
countenance, while inwardly deeming "her love
too light, to woo a wandering guest." The
tables were removed; every knight and gentle
squire "gan choose his dame with *basciomanì*¹³
gay;"

Some fell to dance; some fell to hazardry;¹⁴
Some to make love; some to make merriment;
As diverse wits to diverse things apply:
And all the while fair Malecasta¹⁵ bent
Her crafty engines¹⁶ to her close intent.¹⁷
By this th' eternal lamps, wherewith high Jove
Doth light the lower world, were half y-spent,
And the moist daughters of huge Atlas strove
Into the ocean deep to drive their weary drove.

The guests were lit to their chambers by long
waxen torches; and the Britoness, when alone,
"gan herself despoil, and safe commit to her
soft feather'd nest," where she slept soundly.

Now when as all the world in silence deep
Y-shrouded was, and every mortal wight
Was drown'd in the depth of deadly sleep,
Fair Malecasta, whose engriev'd sprite¹⁸
Could find no rest in such perplex'd plight,
Lightly arose out of her weary bed,
And, under the black veil of guilty night,
Her with a scarlet mantle cover'd,
That was with gold and ermines fair envelop'd.

Then panting soft, and trembling ev'ry joint,
Her fearful feet toward the bow'r¹⁹ she mov'd,
Where she for secret purpose did appoint
To lodge the warlike Maid, unwisely lov'd;
And, to her bed approaching, first she prov'd
Whether she slept or wak'd: with her soft hand

Prattler, the Jester, the Kisser, the Drinker, and the
Night Reveller or pursuer of nocturnal pleasures.

¹¹ Well-arrayed.

¹² Prevent.

¹³ Hand-kissings.

¹⁴ Gaming.

¹⁵ The Unchaste—the name of the Lady of Delight.

¹⁶ Wits, devices.

¹⁷ Secret purpose.

¹⁸ Wounded spirit.

¹⁹ Chamber.

She softly felt if any member mov'd,
And lent her wary ear to understand
If any puff of breath or sign of sense she fand.

Which when as none she found, with easy shift,¹
For fear lest her unwares she should abraid,²
Th' embroider'd quilt she lightly up did lift,
And by her side herself she softly laid,
Of ev'ry finest finger's touch afraid ;
Nor any noise she made, nor word she spake,
But inly sigh'd. At last the royal Maid
Out of her quiet slumber did awake,
And chang'd her weary side the better ease to
take.

Where, feeling one close couch'd by her side,
She lightly leapt out of her fil'd³ bed,
And to her weapon ran, in mind to gride⁴
The loath'd lecher : but the Dame, half dead
Through sudden fear and ghastly drearhead,⁵
Did shriek aloud, that through the house it
rung,
And the whole family,⁶ therewith adread,⁷
Rashly⁸ out of their rous'd couches sprung,
And to the troubled chamber all in arms did
throng.

With the rest came, half-armed, the six
knights, who found their Lady prostrate on the
ground, and on the other side "the warlike
Maid, all in her snow-white smock, with locks
unbound, threat'ning the point of her avenging
blade." They laid the Lady in comfortable
couch, and reared her out of her frozen swound ;
then they began to upbraid the Maiden, but
dared not approach her, restrained by the me-
mory of the last day's loss, and by the presence
of the Redcross Knight at her side.

But one of those six knights, Gardanté hight,
Drew out a deadly bow and arrow keen,
Which forth he sent with felonous⁹ despite
And fell intent against the Virgin sheen :¹⁰
The mortal steel stay'd not till it was seen
To gore her side ; yet was the wound not deep,
But lightly ras'd her soft silken skin,
That drops of purple blood thereout did weep,
Which did her lily smock with stains of vermeil
steep.

Wherewith enrag'd she fiercely at them flew,
And with her flaming sword about her laid,
That none of them foul mischief could eschew,¹¹
But with her dreadful strokes were all dismay'd :
Here, there, and everywhere, about her sway'd
Her wrathful steel, that none might it abide ;
And eke the Redcross Knight gave her good aid,
Ay joining foot to foot, and side to side ;
That in short space their foes they have quite
terrified.

When all are put to shameful flight, the noble
Britomartis arms herself, and, ere the morn,
departs with the Redcross Knight from the haunt
of "so loose life, and so ungentle trade."

¹ Gentle movement.

² Defted.

³ Terror.

⁴ Alarmed.

⁵ Cruel, villainous.

⁶ Awake.

⁷ Pierce.

⁸ Household.

⁹ Hurriedly.

¹⁰ Bright, beautiful.

CANTO II.

The Redcross Knight to Britomart

Describeth Artegall :

*The wondrous mirror, by which she
In love with him did fall.*

HERE have I cause in men just blame to find,
That in their proper praise too partial be,
And not indifferent¹² to woman kind,
To whom no share in arms and chivalry
They do impart, nor maken memory
Of their brave gasts¹³ and prowess martial :
Scarce do they spare to one, or two, or three,
Room in their writs ; yet the same writing small
Does all their deeds deface, and dims their
glories all.

But by record of antique times I find
That women wont in wars to bear most sway,
And to all great exploits themselves inclin'd,
Of which they still the garland bore away ;
Till envious men, fearing their rule's decay,
Gan coin strait laws to curb their liberty :
Yet, since they warlike arms have laid away,
They have excell'd in arts and policy,
That now we foolish men that praise gin eke t'
envy.¹⁴

The poet calls on Britomart to be the example
of warlike puissance in ages past, and on Eliza-
beth to be the precedent of all wisdom ; and
proceeds to tell how, as they rode, her com-
panion began to ask the Briton Maid "what
uncouth wind brought her into those parts,"
and what enterprise made her disguise herself.

Thereat she, sighing softly, had no pow'r
To speak a while, nor ready answer make ;
But with heart-thrilling throbs and bitter
stowre,¹⁵

As if she had a fever fit, did quake,
And ev'ry dainty limb with horror shake ;
And ever and anon the rosy red
Flash'd through her face, as it had been a flake
Of lightning through bright heaven fulmin'd :
At last, the passion past, she thus him answer'd :

From her infancy she had been trained to
arms, loving to confront death at point of foe-
man's spear, and loathing to lead her life "as
ladies wont, in Pleasure's wanton lap, to finger
the fine needle and nice thread." In quest of
perils and adventures hard she had come, "with-
out compass and withouten card," from her
native Greater Britain (Wales) into Faery Land
(England) ; and she asked the Knight if he could
give her news of one called Artegall, on whom
she wished to be revenged for foul dishonour and
reproachful spite that he had done her. She
would have unsaid the name, but the Knight,
taking it up ere it fell, declared her unadvised
to upbraid with unknighly blame a knight so
gentle and famous in war as Artegall. Waxing

¹¹ Escape.

¹² Impartial.

¹³ Deeds.

¹⁴ Of course a compliment to Queen Elizabeth is here
intended.

¹⁵ Emotion.

"inly wondrous glad to hear her love so highly magnified," the Maid still reviled Artégall, and demanded where he might be found. The Knight answered that he had no fixed abode, "but restless walketh all the world around," doing deeds of prowess and redress. More and more pleased at heart, Britomart still feigned gainsay ("so discord oft in music makes the sweetest lay"), and asked by what marks she might know Artégall if she encountered him. The Knight described him—all needlessly, for she knew him before in every part, "to her reveal'd in a mirror plain."

By strange occasion she did him behold,
And much more strangely gan to love his sight,
As it in books hath written been of old.
In Deheubarth, that now South-Wales is hight,
What time king Ryence reign'd and deal'd right,
The great magician Merlin had devis'd,
By his deep science and hell-dreaded might,
A looking-glass, right wondrously aguis'd,¹
Whose virtues through the wide world soon
were solemniz'd.

It virtue had to show in perfect sight
Whatever thing was in the world contain'd,
Betwixt the lowest earth and heaven's height,
So that it to the looker appertain'd :
Whatever foe had wrought, or friend had feign'd,
Therein discover'd was, nor aught might pass,
Nor aught in secret from the same remain'd ;
Forthy² it round and hollow shap'd was,
Like to the world itself, and seem'd a world of
glass.

One day it fortun'd fair Britomart
Into her father's closet to repair ;
For nothing he from her reserv'd apart,
Being his only daughter and his heir ;
Where when she had espied that mirror fair,
Herself a while therein she view'd in vain :³
Then, her advising⁴ of the virtues rare
Which thereof spoken were, she gan again
Her to bethink of that might to herself pertain.

But, as it falleth, in the gentlest hearts
Imperious Love hath highest set his throne,
And tyrannizeth in the bitter smarts
Of them that to him buxom⁵ are and prone :
So thought this maid (as maidens us'd to do'n)
Whom fortune for her husband would allot ;
Not that she lusted after any one,
For she was pure from blame of sinful blot ;
Yet wist her life at last must link in that same
knot.

Eftsoons there was presented to her eye
A comely knight, all arm'd in complete wise,
Through whose bright ventail⁶ lifted up on high
His manly face, that did his foes agrise,⁷
And friends to terms of gentle truce entice,
Look'd forth, as Phoebus' face out of the east
Betwixt two shady mountains doth arise :

¹ Contrived, fashioned.

² Without any definite purpose or thought.

³ Bethinking.

⁴ Front of the helmet.

⁵ Demeanour.

⁶ For that end.

⁷ Obedient.

⁸ Terrify.

⁹ Ermine.

Portly his person was, and much increast
Through his heroic grace and honourable gest.⁸
His crest was cover'd with a couchant hound,
And all his armour seem'd of antique mould,
But wondrous massy and assur'd sound,
And round about y-fretted all with gold,
In which there written was, with ciphers old,
Achilles' arms which Artégall did win :
And on his shield envelop'd sevenfold
He bore a crown'd little ermilin,⁹
That deck'd the azure field with her fair poul-
dred¹⁰ skin.

The damsel well did view his personage,¹¹
And lik'd well ; nor farther fasten'd¹² not,
But went her way ; nor her unguilty age
Did ween, unwares, that her unlucky lot
Lay hidden in the bottom of the pot :
Of hurt unwist¹³ most danger doth redound :
But the false archer, which that arrow shot
So sily that she did not feel the wound,
Did smile full smoothly at her weetless woeful
stound.¹⁴

Thenceforth the feather in her lofty crest,
Ruff'd of¹⁵ love, gan lowly to avail ;¹⁶
And her proud portance¹⁷ and her princely gest,⁸
With which she erst triumph'd, now did quail :
Sad, solemn, sour, and full of fancies frail,
She wox ; yet wist she neither how, nor why ;
She wist not, silly maid, what she did ail,
Yet wist she was not well at ease, pardie ;¹⁸
Yet thought it was not love, but some melán-
choly.

So soon as Night had with her pallid hue
Defac'd the beauty of the shining sky,
And reft from men the world's desir'd view,
She with her nurse adown to sleep did lie ;
But sleep full far away from her did fly :
Instead thereof sad sighs and sorrows deep
Kept watch and ward about her warily ;
That naught she did but wail, and often steep
Her dainty couch with tears which closely¹⁹ she
did weep.

And if, worn out, she slept, fantastic dreams
made her start from her bed, to "renew her
former smart, and think of that fair visage
written in her heart." One night Glaucé, her
ancient nurse, "feeling her leap out of her
loath'd nest," caught her in her arms, and
questioned her as to the cause of her changed
manner ; promising, if the cause was love, and
that love worthy of her race and royal seed, to
ease her grief and win her will. With many
embraces, caresses, and assurances that "that
blinded god, which hath ye blindly smit, an-
other arrow hath your lover's heart to hit,"
Glaucé drew from Britomart the confession that
she suffered from a hopeless passion for "the
only shade and semblance of a knight," seen in
the magic mirror. The aged nurse, relieved to
find that no unlawful or unnatural desire preyed

¹⁰ Spotted.

¹¹ Fixed her thoughts.

¹² Unsuspected hurt.

¹³ Droop.

¹⁴ Assuredly.

¹⁵ Person.

¹⁶ Unknown.

¹⁷ Ruffled by.

¹⁸ Carriage.

¹⁹ Secretly.

on the Princess's mind, wished Britomart joy of her well-bestowed affection, and "upleaning on her elbow weak, her alabaster breast she soft did kiss; which all that while she felt to pant and quake, as it an earthquake were." Britomart, however, contended that her case was worse than that of Phasiphaë and other "shameful and unkind" lovers mentioned by Glaucé; for they at least "possessed their horrible intent;" while she, less fortunate and more foolish than Narcissus, beguiled with the love of his own face, loved a mere shade, and must feed on shadows while she died for food. Glaucé, maintaining that every shadow must have a body, promised, if Britomart could not overcome her passion, to compass her desire, and find that loved knight; and at last the maiden, somewhat comforted, sank to sleep, while the aged nurse "set her by to watch, and set her by to weep."

Early, the morrow next, before that Day
His joyous face did to the world reveal,
They both uprose and took their ready way
Unto the church, their prayers to appeal,¹
With great devotion, and with little zeal:
For the fair damsel from the holy herse²
Her love-sick heart to other thoughts did steal;
And that old dame said many an idle verse,
Out of her daughter's heart fond fancies to
reverse.³

Return'd home, the royal Infant fell
Into her former fit; for why? no pow'r
Nor guidance of herself in her did dwell.
But th' aged nurse, her calling to her bow'r,
Had gather'd rue, and savin, and the flow'r
Of camphora, and calamint, and dill;
All which she in an earthen pot did pour,
And to the brim with coltwood did it fill,
And many drops of milk and blood through it
did spill.

Then, taking thrice three hairs from off her
head,
Them trebly braided in a threefold lace,
And round about the pot's mouth bound the
thread;

And, after having whisper'd a space
Certain sad words with hollow voice and base,⁴
She to the Virgin said, thrice said she it;
"Come, daughter, come; come, spit upon my
face;

Spit thrice upon me, thrice upon me spit;
Th' uneven number for this business is most fit."

That said, her round about she from her turn'd,
She turn'd her contrary to the sun;
Thrice she her turn'd contrary, and return'd
All contrary; for she the right did shun;
And ever what she did was straight undone.
So thought she to undo her daughter's love:
But love, that is in gentle breast begun,
No idle charms so lightly may remove;
That well can witness, who by trial it does prove.

¹ Put up.² Service, rehearsal.³ Drive away.⁴ Low.⁵ Fury, violence of love; the same word as "breme,"

Nor aught it might the noble Maid avail,
Nor slake the fury of her cruel flame,
But that she still did waste, and still did wail,
That, through long languor and heart-burning
brame,⁵

She shortly like a pin'd ghost became
Which long hath waited by the Stygian strand:
That when old Glaucé saw, for fear lest blame
Of her miscarriage should in her be fand,
She wist not how t' amend, nor how it to with-
stand.

CANTO III.

*Merlin bewrays⁶ to Britomart
The state of Artegall:
And shows the famous progeny,
Which from them springen shall.*

Most sacred fire, that burnest mightily
In living breasts, y-kindled first above
Amongst th' eternal spheres and lamping⁷ sky,
And thence pour'd into men, which men call
Love;

Not that same, which doth base affections move
In brutish minds, and filthy lust inflame;
But that sweet fit that doth true beauty love,
And chooseth Virtue for his dearest Dame,
Whence spring all noble deeds and never-dying
fame:

Well did Antiquity a god thee deem,
That over mortal minds hast so great might,
To order them as best to thee doth seem,
And all their actions to direct aright:
The fatal⁸ purpose of divine foresight
Thou dost effect in destin'd descents,
Through deep impression of thy secret might,
And stirredst up th' herbés' high intents,
Which the late world admires for wondrous
monuments.

But never was braver proof of Love's power,
than when the royal British Maid sought "an
unknown paramour, from the world's end,
through many a bitter stowre." After invoking
Clio's aid to recount his glorious Sovereign's
goodly ancestry, the poet relates that Glaucé,
finding all her charms and herbs unavailing to
cure Britomart's grief, resolved to seek out
Merlin himself, and ascertain from him "under
what coast of heav'n the man did dwell"
whose image had appeared in the magic mirror.
"Forthwith themselves disguising both in
strange and base attire," the Princess and
her nurse took their way to Maridunum (Caer-
marthen), where Merlin dwelt "low under-
neath the ground, in a deep delve, far from
the view of day."

And, if thou ever happen that same way
To travel, go to see that dreadful place:
It is a hideous hollow cave (they say)
Under a rock that lies a little space

which Chaucer uses to describe the fierceness of a combat.

⁶ Reveals.⁷ Shining with lamps or stars.⁸ Decreed by fate.

From the swift Barry, tumbling down apace
Amongst the woody hills of Dinevowr :¹
But dare thou not, I charge, in any case,
To enter into that same baleful bow'r,²
For fear the cruel fiends should thee unware
devour :

But, standing high aloft, low lay thine ear,
And there such ghastly noise of iron chains
And brazen cauldrons thou shalt rumbling hear,
Which thousand sprites with long-enduring pains
Do toss, that it will stun thy feeble brains ;
And oftentimes great groans, and grievous
stounds,³

When too huge toil and labour them constrains ;
And oftentimes loud strokes and ringing sounds
From under that deep rock most horribly
rebounds.

The cause, some say, is this : A little while
Before that Merlin died, he did intend
A brazen wall in compass to compile
About Caermardin,⁴ and did it commend
Unto these sprites to bring to perfect end :
During which work the Lady of the Lake,
Whom long he lov'd, for him in haste did send ;
Who, thereby forc'd his workmen to forsake,
Them bound, till his return, their labour not to
slake.⁵

In the mean time, through that false lady's train⁶
He was surpris'd, and buried under bier,
Nor ever to his work return'd again :
Nathless those fiends may not their work forbear,
So greatly his commandement they fear,
But there do toil and travail day and night,
Until that brazen wall they up do rear.
For Merlin had in magic more insight
Than ever him before or after living wight :

For he by words could call out of the sky
Both sun and moon, and make them him obey ;
The land to sea, and sea to mainland dry,
And darksome night he eke could turn to day :
Huge hosts of men he could alone dismay,
And hosts of men of meanest things could frame,
Whenso him list his enemies to fray :⁷
That to this day, for terror of his fame,
The fiends do quake when any him to them does
name.

Entering the cave—not without fearful hesi-
tation, which, "with Love to friend," Britomart
first overcame—they found Merlin "writing
strange characters in the ground," and all un-
moved by their coming, of which he knew well
beforehand. Glaucé at first pretended to be
ignorant of the cause of the "sore evil" that
afflicted Britomart ; and Merlin, smiling softly
at her smooth dissembling speeches, recom-
mended that some physician should be con-
sulted ; for "who help may have elsewhere, in
vain seeks wonders out of magic spell." Still

disguising her knowledge, Glaucé said that the
evil was beyond the power of leechcraft, and
"either seems some curs'd witch's deed, or evil
sprite." Bursting forth in laughter, the wizard,
addressing his visitors by name, told them that
he knew the cause of their coming.

The doubtful maid, seeing herself descried,
Was all abash'd, and her pure ivory
Into a clear carnation sudden dy'd ;
As fair Aurora, rising hastily,
Doth by her blushing tell that she did lie
All night in old Tithonus' frozen bed,
Whereof she seems asham'd inwardly :
But her old nurse was naught dishearten'd,
But vantage made of that which Merlin had
aread ;⁸

And said ; "Since then thou knowest all our
grief

(For what dost not thou know?) of grace I pray,
Pity our plaint, and yield us meet relief!"
With that the prophet still a while did stay ;
And then his spirit thus gan forth display ;
"Most noble Virgin, that by fatal lore
Hast learn'd to love, let no whit thee dismay
The hard begin⁹ that meets thee in the door,
And with sharp fits thy tender heart oppresseth
sore :

"For so must all things excellent begin ;
And eke enrooted deep must be that tree,
Whose big embodied branches shall not lin¹⁰
Till they to heaven's height forth stretch'd be.
For from thy womb a famous progeny
Shall spring out of the ancient Trojan blood,
Which shall revive the sleeping memory
Of those same antique peers, the heaven's brood,
Which Greek and Asian rivers stain'd with
their blood.

"Renowned kings, and sacred emperors,
Thy fruitful offspring, shall from thee descend ;
Brave captains, and most mighty warriors,
That shall their conquests through all lands
extend,
And their decay'd kingdoms shall amend :
The feeble Britons, broken with long war,
They shall uprear, and mightily defend
Against their foreign foe that comes from far,
Till universal peace compound all civil jar."

No mere chance, "but the straight course of
heav'nly destiny," had guided Britomart's
glance into the charmed glass. Glaucé inquiring
how the man might be found, Merlin answered
that the destined spouse of Britomart was Arte-
gall, who, though dwelling in Faery Land, was
not of Faery birth or kindred ; he had been
stolen by false Faeries from his cradle, and
believed that "he by an Elf was gotten of a
Fay." He was really the son of Gorlois, brother
to Cador, king of Cornwall ; the renown of his

and of waving hands," and uses it to imprison him for
ever in the hollow oak. The old "Morte d'Arthur,"
however, makes Merlin the importunate lover of the
Lady of the Lake, who, to get rid of him, contrived to
bury him under a great rock in Cornwall.

⁷ When he pleased to terrify his foes.

⁸ Declared.

⁹ Beginning.

¹⁰ Stop.

¹ Dynevor Castle, near Caermarthen, the chief resi-
dence, in olden time, of the Princes of South Wales.

² Abode ; vault.

³ Noises.

⁴ Caermarthen.

⁵ Slacken.

⁶ Deceit, stratagem. The reader may remember how,
in Tennyson's "Idylls of the King," Vivien cajoles
Merlin into telling her the charm "of woven paces

warlike feats stretched "from where the day out of the sea doth spring, until the closure of the evening;" and Britomart's destiny is to bring him back to his native soil, that he may aid his country against Paynim (Saxon) invaders. After long sway in arms, Artegall will be "too rath¹ cut off by practice criminal of secret foes;" but his son shall "living him in all activity" to her present, take from the head of his cousin Constantine the crown that was his father's right, and issue forth with dreadful might against his Saxon foes. "Like as a lion that in drowsy cave hath long time slept, himself so shall he shake," and overthrow the Mercians thrice in battle. The seer then sketched the reigns of Vortipore; of Malgo; of Careticus; the cruel invasion of great Gormond, who, having subdued Ireland and fixed his throne there, "like a swift otter, fell through emptiness, shall overswim the sea" with many of his Norsemen, to aid the Briton's foes; the overthrow of proud Ethelred by Cadwan; the mighty vengeance for all these wrongs taken by Cadwallin on his son Edwin; the slaughter of Edwin's sons "in battle upon Layburn plain;" Cadwallin's conquest of Northumbria; the death of Britons' reign with him, in spite of all the efforts of Cadwallader, his son—who, driven from his native land, shall live in wretched case in Armorica (Bretagne, or Lesser Britain, in France).

"Then woe, and woe, and everlasting woe,
Be to the Briton babe that shall be born,
To live in thralldom of his father's foe!
Late king, now captive; late lord, now forlorn;²

The world's reproach; the cruel victor's scorn;
Banish'd from princely bow'r to wasteful wood!
O! who shall help me to lament and mourn
The royal seed, the antique Trojan blood,
Whose empire longer here than ever any stood!"

The Damsel was full deep impassion'd,
Both for his grief, and for her people's sake,
Whose future woes so plain he fashion'd;
And, sighing sore, at length him thus bespake;
"Ah! but will Heaven's fury never slake,
Nor vengeance huge relent itself at last?
Will not long misery late mercy make,
But shall their name for ever be defac'd,
And quite from off the earth their memory be ras'd?"

"Nay," answered Merlin; after twice four hundred years the Britons would be restored to former rule; and even in the period of their obscurity "their beams would oft break forth, that men them fair might see"—as in the careers of Roderick the Great, Howell Dha, and Griffith Conan. Nor should the Saxons enjoy all peaceably the crown wrested from the

Britons; first a Raven, from the rising sun (the Danes) would "bid his faithless chickens overrun the fruitful plains;" and then a Lion (William of Normandy) would come roaring from the seaboard of Neustria, to rend from the head of the Danish tyrant (Harold) the usurped crown, and divide among his own hungry whelps the conquered land.

"Then, when the term is full accomplish'd,
There shall a spark of fire, which hath long while
Been in his ashes rak'd up and hid,
Be freshly kindled in the fruitful Isle
Of Mona, where it lurk'd in exile;
Which shall break forth into bright burning
flame,
And reach into the house that bears the style
Of royal majesty and sov'reign name:
So shall the Briton blood their crown again re-
claim.³

"Thenceforth eternal union shall be made
Between the nations different afore,
And sacred Peace shall lovingly persuade
The warlike minds to learn her goodly lore,
And civil arms to exercise no more:
Then shall a Royal Virgin⁴ reign, which shall
Stretch her white rod over the Belgic shore,
And the great Castle smite so sore withal,
That it shall make him shake, and shortly learn
to fall:

"But yet the end is not"—"there Merlin stay'd, as overcome of the spirit's power;" but soon he regained his cheerful looks, and reassured the two fearful women, who returned home with lighter hearts, "conceiving hope of comfort glad." They secretly took counsel how they might effect their hard enterprise; and at last Glauce "in her foolhardy wit conceived a bold device." Good King Uther was then warring on the Paynim (Saxon) brethren Octa and Oza; and the nurse's plan was, that they should don armour and go to the wars—taking inspiration from the memory of many martial British royal dames, as Boadicea, Guendolene, Martia, and Emmelen, and also from the present example of a virgin who fought valiantly in the Saxon ranks—Angela, the leader of a martial and mighty people, the Angles, who were dreaded above all the other Saxons. Britomart gladly accepted the nurse's counsel, "her maid's attire to turn into a massy habergeon," and bade her put all things in readiness.

Th' old woman naught that needed did omit;
But all things did conveniently purvey.
It fortun'd (so time their turn did fit)
A band of Britons, riding on foray
Few days before, had gotten a great prey
Of Saxon goods; amongst the which was seen
A goodly armour, and full rich array,

which, the first Tudor Monarch, Henry VII., gave to his eldest son the name of Arthur.

⁴ Queen Elizabeth; who protected and aided the Low Countries in their contest with Spain, and smote the pride and power of Castile in the overthrow of the Armada.

¹ Soon; "rather" is the surviving comparative of this now obsolete word.

² Ruined.

³ This refers to the pretended descent of the Tudors from King Arthur; in honour, or in vindication, of

Which long'd to Angela, the Saxon queen,
All fretted round with gold, and goodly well
beseen.

The same, with all the other ornaments,
King Ryence caus'd to be hang'd high
In his chief church, for endless monuments
Of his success and gladful victory :
Of which herself advising¹ readily,
In th' evening late old Glaucé thither led
Fair Britomart, and that same armoury
Down taking, her therein apparell'd
Well as she might, and with brave baldric²
garnish'd.

Beside those arms there stood a mighty spear,
Which Bladud made by magic art of yore,
And us'd the same in battle aye to bear ;
Since which it had been here preserv'd in store,
For its great virtues prov'd long afore :
For never wight so fast in sell³ could sit,
But him perforce unto the ground it bore :
Both spear she took and shield which hung by
it ;
Both spear and shield of great pow'r, for her
purpose fit.

Thus when she had the Virgin all array'd,
Another harness which did hang thereby
About herself she dight,⁴ that the young maid
She might in equal arms accompany,
And as her squire attend her carefully :
Then to their ready steeds they clomb full light ;
And through back ways, that none might them
espy,
Cover'd with secret cloud of silent night,
Themselves they forth convey'd, and pass'd for-
ward right :

Nor rested until, following Merlin's directions,
they came to Faery Land, and met the Redcross
Knight ; from whom, his way diverging, Brito-
mart now took friendly leave.

CANTO IV.

*Bold Marinell of⁵ Britomart
Is thrown on the Rich Strand :
Fair Florimell of Arthur is
Long follow'd, but not fand.*

AFTER her parting with the Redcross Knight,
with whom she bound "a friendly league of love
perpetual," Britomart travelled on in pensive
mood, turning over in her mind all the discourse
of Artegall, and feeling the wound of love more
deeply pierce her heart. Coming at last to the
sea-coast,

There she alighted from her light-foot beast,
And, sitting down upon the rocky shore,
Bade her old squire unlace her lofty crest :
Then, having view'd a while the surges hoar
That 'gainst the craggy cliffs did loudly roar,

¹ Bethinking.
³ Saddle.

² Belt.
⁴ Girt, put on.

And in their raging surquedry⁶ disdain'd
That the fast earth affronted them so sore,
And their devouring covetise restrain'd ;
Thereat she sigh'd deep, and after thus com-
plain'd :

"Huge sea of sorrow and tempestuous grief,
Wherein my feeble bark is toss'd long,
Far from the hop'd haven of relief,
Why do thy cruel billows beat so strong,
And thy moist mountains each on other throng,
Threat'ning to swallow up my fearful life ?
O, do thy cruel wrath and spiteful wrong
At length allay, and stint⁷ thy stormy strife,
Which in these troubled bowels reigns and
rageth rife !

"For else my feeble vessel, craz'd and crack'd
Through thy strong buffets and outrageous blows,
Cannot endure, but needs it must be wrack'd
On the rough rocks, or the sandy shallows,
The while that Love it steers, and Fortune rows :
Love, my lewd pilot, hath a restless mind,
And Fortune, boatswain, no assurance knows,
But sail withouten stars 'gainst tide and wind :
How can they other do, since both are bold and
blind !

"Thou god of winds, that reignest in the seas,
That reignest also in the continent,
At last blow up some gentle gale of ease,
The which may bring my ship, ere it be rent,
Unto the gladsome port of her intent !
Then, when I shall myself in safety see,
A table,⁸ for eternal monument
Of thy great grace and my great jeopardy,
Great Neptune, I avow to hallow unto thee !"

While Glaucé strove to assuage her secret
grief, Britomart spied a horseman all in armour
bright galloping towards her. Hastily donning
her helmet and remounting her courser, she
poured her sorrow into sudden wrath—like a
foggy mist dissolving itself in a stormy shower
when the watery south wind blows up from the
sea-coast. Warned by the stranger knight, in
stern words, to desist from the forbidden way,
the Maid, thrilled with deep disdain, answered
that "words fearen babes," and that she would
pass or die. The two knights rode strongly
against each other ; Britomart, struck full on
the breast by the stranger's spear, was made
to "decline her head, and touch her crupper
with her crown ;" but, more unfortunate, her
adversary received her spear through his left
side, and was tumbled in a gory heap upon the
sandy shore.

Like as the sacred ox that careless stands,
With gilden horns and flowery garlands crown'd,
Proud of his dying honour and dear bands,
While th' altars fume with frankincense around,
All suddenly, with mortal stroke astound'⁹,
Doth grovelling fall, and with his streaming gore
Distains the pillars and the holy ground,
And the fair flow'rs that deck'd him afore :
So fell proud Marinell upon the Precious Shore.

⁵ By.
⁷ Cease.

⁶ Arrogance.
⁸ Votive tablet.

The martial Maid staid not him to lament,
But forward rode, and kept her ready way
Along the Strand ; which as she over-went
She saw bestrow'd all with rich array
Of pearls and precious stones of great assay,¹
And all the gravel mix'd with golden ore :
Whereat she wonder'd much, but would not
stay
For gold, or pearls, or precious stones, an hour,
But them despis'd all ; for all² was in her
pow'r.

Tidings of her adversary's fall came to the ear
of his mother, "the black-brow'd Cymoent, the
daughter of great Nereus ;" who, surprised by
the earth-born Dumarin as she lay asleep in a
secret place, had borne this boy and named him
Marinell, fostering him up till he became a
mighty man at arms, and kept the Rich Strand
against all comers. To advance his fame and
glory more, his mother had besought her sea-
god sire to endow him with treasure and rich
store above all the sons of men.

The god did grant his daughter's dear demand,
To do³ his nephew⁴ in all riches flow :
Eftsoons his heap'd waves he did command
Out of their hollow bosom forth to throw
All the huge treasure which the sea below
Had in his greedy gulf devour'd deep,
And him enrich'd through the overthrow
And wrecks of many wretches, which did weep
And often wail their wealth which he from
them did keep.

Shortly upon that shore there heap'd was
Exceeding riches, and all precious things,
The spoil of all the world ; that it did pass
The wealth of th' East, and pomp of Persian
kings :

Gold, amber, ivory, pearls, owches,⁵ rings,
And all that else was precious and dear,
The sea unto him voluntary brings ;
That shortly he a great lord did appear,
As was in all the Land of Faery, or elsewhere.

Seeing his valour, his mother feared lest it
should bring him to woe, and often counselled
him to forbear bloody battle and strife. She
inquired of Proteus the destiny of her son, and
was told "from womankind to keep him well ;
for of a woman he should have much ill ; a
virgin strange and stout him should dismay or
kill." Therefore she daily warned him not to
entertain the love of women ; he obeyed the
warning, "and ever from fair ladies' love did
fly ;" and though many ladies complained that
they would die for love of him, "die whose list
for him, he was love's enemy." But, while his
mother thought she had armed him, she had
quite disarmed him ; for she feared not woman's
force, but woman's love ; yet by the womanly
force of Britomart—to whom Proteus' ambigu-
ous prophecy referred—her son was brought to

grief. Cymoent learned the news of his defeat
where she play'd "amongst her watery sisters
by a pond, gath'ring sweet daffodillies, to have
made gay garlands, from the sun their fore-
heads fair to shade."

Eftsoons both flow'rs and garlands far away
She flung, and her fair dewy locks y-rent ;
To sorrow huge she turn'd her former play,
And gamesome mirth to grievous dreariment :⁶
She threw herself down on the continent,⁷
Nor word did speak, but lay as in a swown,
While all her sisters did for her lament
With yelling outcries, and with shrieking soun' ;
And ev'ry one did tear her garland from her
crown.

Soon as she up out of her deadly fit
Arose, she bade her chariot to be brought ;
And all her sisters, that with her did sit,
Bade eke at once their chariots to be sought :
Then, full of bitter grief and pensive thought,
She to her waggon clomb ; clomb all the rest,
And forth together went, with sorrow fraught :
The waves obedient to their behest
Them yielded ready passage, and their rage sur-
ceas'd.

Great Neptune stood amaz'd at their sight,
While on his broad round back they softly slid ;
And eke himself mourn'd at their mournful
plight,
Yet wist not what their wailing meant, yet did,
For great compassion of their sorrow, bid
His mighty waters to them buxom⁸ be :
Eftsoons the roaring billows still abid,⁹
And all the grisly monsters of the sea
Stood gaping at their gate,¹⁰ and wonder'd them
to see.

A team of dolphins rang'd in array
Drew the smooth chariot of sad Cymoent ;
They were all taught by Triton to obey
To the long reins at her commandement :
As swift as swallows on the waves they went,
That their broad flaggy fins no foam did rear,
Nor bubbling roundel¹¹ they behind them sent ;
The rest of¹² other fishes drawn were,
Which with their finny oars the swelling sea
did shear.¹³

Soon as they be arriv'd upon the brim
Of the Rich Strand, their chariot they forlore,¹⁴
And let their team'd fishes softly swim
Along the margent of the foamy shore,
Lest they their fins should bruise, and surbate¹⁵
sore

Their tender feet upon the stony ground :
And, coming to the place where, all in gore
And cruddy¹⁶ blood enwallow'd, they found
The luckless Marinell lying in deadly swoond,

Cymoent swooned at the sight. "But, soon
as life recover'd had the rein" she made piteous
lamentation—all her sister nymphs filling up

¹ Value.² Although'all.³ Make.⁴ Grandson.⁵ Jewels, golden ornaments.⁶ Sorrow.⁷ Ground.⁸ Yielding.⁹ Abode.¹⁰ Passage, progress.¹¹ Circle or eddy.¹² By.¹³ Divide.¹⁴ Left.¹⁵ Bruise.¹⁶ Ourdled.

"her sobbing breaches with sad complement"—and reproached "fond¹ Proteus, father of false prophecies." "I feared love," she cried; "but they that love do live; but they that die do neither love nor hate." When all had sorrowed their fill, they softly searched his wound; disarming him, they spread on the ground "their watchet² mantles fring'd with silver round," wiped away the gelly (congealed) blood, and poured in sovereign balm and nectar good. Then the lily-handed Liagore, who had learned leechcraft from Apollo, her lover, felt the pulse of Marinell, and gave his mother hope.

Then, up him taking in their tender hands,
They easily unto her chariot bear:
Her team at her commandment quiet stands,
While they the corse into her waggon rear,³
And strow with flow'rs the lamentable bier:
Then all the rest into their coaches climb,
And through the brackish waves their passage shear;

Upon great Neptune's neck they softly swim,
And to her watery chamber swiftly carry him.
Deep in the bottom of the sea, her bow'r
Is built of hollow billows heap'd high,
Like to thick clouds that threat a stormy show'r;
And vaulted all within, like to the sky
In which the gods do dwell eternally:
There they him laid in easy couch well dight;⁴
And sent in haste for Tryphon, to apply
Salves to his wounds, and medicines of might:
For Tryphon of sea-gods the sov'reign leech is hight.

The nymphs sat all around lamenting, while Cymoent, viewing his wide wound, oft cursed the hand that gave it. "But none of all those curses overtook the warlike Maid," who fairly thrived, though now pursued by Archimago, who had separated her from the Prince and Guyon. They, it will be remembered, had set out to rescue the lady on the white palfrey, pursued by the fierce lustful forester. "Through thick and thin, through mountains and through plains," the champions follow the fearful damsel; at a double way the Prince takes one path, Guyon the other; while Timias, Arthur's squire, still chases the forester. Arthur's chance was to take the way on which the damsel fled before; he caught sight of her, and vainly entreated her to stay; but still she fled as dove from hawk, for though she saw that the forester no longer pursued, she had equal terror of the unknown knight. But darkness came on, and the Prince had to abandon the chase, cursing his wicked fortune. Losing his way, he dismounted and laid himself down to sleep; but sleep refused to come; "instead thereof sad sorrow and disdain did of his hard hap vex his noble breast," and he was a prey to a thousand fancies, often wishing that the lady fair might be the Faery Queen after whom he complained, or that his

Faery Queen were such as she; "and ever hasty Night be blamed bitterly:"

"Night! thou foul mother of annoyance sad,
Sister of heavy Death, and nurse of Woe,
Which wast begot in heav'n, but for thy bad
And brutish shape thrust down to hell below,
Where, by the grim flood of Cocytus slow,
Thy dwelling is in Erebus' black house
(Black Erebus, thy husband, is the foe
Of all the gods), where thou ungracious
Half of thy days dost lead in horror hideous;

"What had th' Eternal Maker need of thee
The world in his continual course to keep,
That dost all things deface, nor lettest see
The beauty of his work? Indeed in sleep
The slothful body that doth love to steep
His lustless⁵ limbs, and drown his baser mind,
Doth praise thee oft, and oft from Stygian deep
Calls thee his goddess, in his error blind,
And great Dame Nature's handmaid, cheering
every kind.

"But well I wot that to a heavy heart
Thou art the root and nurse of bitter cares,
Breeder of new, renewer of old smarts:
Instead of rest thou lendest railing⁶ tears;
Instead of sleep thou sendest troublous fears
And dreadful visions, in the which alive
The dreary image of sad Death appears:
So from the weary spirit thou dost drive
Desired rest, and men of happiness deprive.

"Under thy mantle black there hidden lie
Light-shunning Theft, and traitorous Intent,
Abhorred Bloodshed, and vile Felony,
Shameful Deceit, and Danger imminent,
Foul Horror, and eke hellish Dreariment:⁷
All these, I wot, in thy protection be,
And light do shun, for fear of being shent:⁸
For light alike is loath'd of them and thee:
And all that lewdness love do hate the light to see.⁹

"For Day discovers all dishonest ways,
And showeth each thing as it is in deed:
The praises of High God he fair displays,
And His large bounty rightly doth aread:¹⁰
Day's dearest children be the blessed seed
Which Darkness shall subdue and heaven win:
Truth is his daughter; he her first did breed,
Most sacred virgin without spot of sin:
Our life is day; but death with darkness doth
begin.

"O when will Day then turn to me again,
And bring with him his long-expected light!
O Titan! haste to rear thy joyous wain;
Speed thee to spread abroad thy beam's bright,
And chase away this too long ling'ring Night;
Chase her away, from whence she came, to hell:
She, she it is, that hath me done despite:
There let her with the damned spirits dwell,
And yield her room to Day, that can it govern
well."

⁹ John iii. 20: "For every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."

¹⁰ Declare.

¹ Foolish.

² Light blue.

³ Raise.

⁴ Prepared.

⁵ Languid.

⁶ Flowing, streaming.

⁷ Sorrow.

⁸ Shamed.

Outwearing the weary night in restless anguish and unquiet pain, ere morn the Prince arose and went forth with heavy look and lumpish pace, betraying the discomposure of his mind.

CANTO V.

*Prince Arthur hears of Florimell :
Three fosters¹ Timias wound ;
Belphabe finds him almost dead,
And reareth out of swoond.*

SEEKING an issue from the forest, the Prince met a dwarf, who seemed terrified and was all bescratched and lamed by running through the thick wood. He learned from the dwarf that his lady, Florimell, had quitted Faery Court, in great grief at the news that her only love, Marinell, the sea-nymph's son, had been slain by a foreign foe. All her delight was set on Marinell, though he set naught at all by Florimell ; and she had vowed never to return till she found her love, alive or dead. The Prince, who recognised in the description of Florimell the lady whom he had pursued in vain, comforted the dwarf with the promise never to forsake him till he found tidings of his dame ; and the two journeyed together—the Prince greatly lamenting the absence of his squire. Meanwhile, Timias had ridden fiercely after the forester foul, to take vengeance for the insult to the lady ; but the villain escaped for the time, by the swiftness of his steed or his own knowledge of the wood-paths. Coming to his two brothers—“for they were three ungracious children of one graceless sire”—he stirred them up to aid him in revenge on the “foolhardy squire ;” and the trio placed themselves in ambush for Timias in the thick wood, beside a covert glade, near a narrow ford. Timias rode unsuspectingly down to the ford ; and when he was entangled in the water, the forester, who had formerly fled, appeared on the steep bank, and launched a javelin at him. Though unwounded, the squire could not mount the bank, from which the forester kept him off with his long boar-spear ; while one of the brothers shot from the thicket “a cruel shaft headed with deadly ill, and feathered with an unlucky quill,” that sank deep into his thigh. Stung by wrath and vengeance, Timias struggled up the bank, when the third brother “drove at him with all his might and main” a forest-bill ; but, avoiding the blow, the squire pierced both sides of his assailant with his spear, and tumbled him dead to the ground. Ere long the two others shared the same fate ; the pursuer of Florimell had his head cleft to the chin ; at the third, who sought to fly after discharging a useless arrow, Timias struck “with force so violent, that headless him

into the ford he sent.” But now he fell to earth in deadly swoon from his own wound ; and death seemed at hand, if Providence had not sent to his aid the “noble huntress” Belphabe, who had so affrighted Braggadocio.

She on a day, as she pursued the chase
Of some wild beast, which with her arrows keen
She wounded had, the same along did trace
By track of blood, which she had freshly seen
To have besprinkled all the grassy green ;
By the great persue² which she there perceiv'd,
Well hop'd she the beast engor'd³ had been,
And made more haste the life to have bereav'd :
But ah ! her expectation greatly was deceiv'd.

Shortly she came where as that woeful squire,
With blood deform'd,⁴ lay in deadly swoond ;
In whose fair eyes, like lamps of quenched fire,
The crystal humour stood congeal'd round ;
His locks, like faded leaves fallen to ground,
Knotted with blood in bunches rudely ran ;
And his sweet lips, on which, before that
stound,⁵

The bud of youth to blossom fair began,
Spoil'd of their rosy red, were waxen pale and wan.

Saw never living eye more heavy sight,
That could have made a rock of stone to rue,⁶
Or rive in twain : which when that Lady bright,
Beside all hope,⁷ with melting eyes did view,
All suddenly abash'd she chang'd hue,
And with stern horror backward gan to start :
But, when she better him beheld, she grew
Full of soft passion and unwonted smart :
The point of pity pierc'd through her tender heart.

Stooping down, she felt by his pulse that life yet remained in his frozen members ; then, undoing his armour, she “rub'd his temples, and each trembling vein,” and went hastily into the woods to seek remedial herbs, of which she had great knowledge. Returning with “the sovereign weed,” she pounded and bruised it ; with her lily hands she squeezed the juice into the wound, softening the flesh all around ; and bound the wound with her scarf, to keep it from cold.

By this he had sweet life recur'd⁸ again,
And, groaning inly deep, at last his eyes,
His watery eyes drizzling like dewy rain,
He up gan lift toward the azure skies,
From whence descend all hopeless⁹ remedies :
Therewith he sigh'd ; and, turning him aside,
The goodly maid, full of divinities
And gifts of heavenly grace, he by him spied,
Her bow and gilden quiver lying him beside.

“Mercy ! dear Lord,” said he, “what grace is this

That thou hast showed to me, sinful wight,
To send thine angel from her bow'r of bliss
To comfort me in my distressed plight !
Angel, or goddess, do I call thee right ?

¹ Foresters.

² Trail, continuous track, of blood, which she “pursued” in quest of the beast.

³ Pierced through.

⁴ Disfigured.

⁵ Pity.

⁶ Recovered.

⁷ Misfortune.

⁸ Beyond all expectation.

⁹ Unhoped for.

What service may I do unto thee meet,
That hast from darkness me return'd to light,
And with thy heav'nly salves and med'cines
sweet
Hast dress'd my sinful wounds! I kiss thy
bless'd feet."

Thereat she blushing said; "Ah! gentle squire,
Nor goddess I, nor angel; but the maid
And daughter of a woody nymph, desire
No service but thy safety and aid;
Which if thou gain, I shall be well repaid.
We mortal wights, whose lives and fortunes be
To common accidents still open laid,
Are bound with common bond of frailty
To succour wretched wights whom we captiv'd
see."

Two of Belphebe's damsels came up, and were
sent to catch the squire's horse; on which the
wounded youth was set, and forth with them
conveyed.

Into that forest far they thence him led,
Where was their dwelling; in a pleasant glade
With mountains round about environ'd
And mighty woods, which did the valley shade,
And like a stately theatre it made,
Spreading itself into a spacious plain;
And in the midst a little river play'd
Amongst the pumy¹ stones, which seem'd to
plain²

With gentle murmur that his course they did
restrain.

Beside the same a dainty place there lay,
Planted with myrtle trees and laurels green,
In which the birds sung many a lovely lay
Of God's high praise, and of their sweet love's
teen,³

As it an earthly paradise had been:
In whose enclosed shadow there was pight⁴
A fair pavilion, scarcely to be seen,
The which was all within most richly dight,⁵
That greatest princes living it might well delight.
Thither they brought that wounded squire, and
laid

In easy couch his feeble limbs to rest.
He rested him a while; and then the maid
His ready wound with better salves new drest:
Daily she dress'd him, and did the best,
His grievous hurt to warish,⁶ that she might;
That shortly she his dolour hath redrest,
And his foul sore reduc'd to fair plight:
It she reduc'd, but himself destroy'd quite.

O foolish physio, and unfruitful pain,⁷
That heals up one, and makes another wound!
She his hurt thigh to him recur'd again,
But hurt his heart, the which before was sound,
Through an unwary dart which did rebound
From her fair eyes and gracious countenance.
What boots it him from death to be unbound,
To be captiv'd in endless dur'nce⁸
Of sorrow and despair without allegiance!⁹

¹ Pumice, porous; so, in "The Shepherd's Calendar" for March, Thosmalin says, "Then pumie stones I hast'ly hent, and threw."
² Pain.
³ Complains.
⁴ Placed, pitched.

Still as his wound did gather, and grow whole,
So still his heart wox sore, and health decay'd:
Madness to save a part, and lose the whole!
Still when as he beheld the heav'nly maid,
While daily plasters to his wound she laid,
So still his malady the more increast,
The while her matchless beauty him dismay'd.
Ah God! what other could he do at least,
But love so fair a lady that his life releast!
Long while he strove in his courageous breast
With reason due the passion to subdue,
And love for to dialodge out of his nest:
Still when her excellencies he did view,
Her sov'reign bounty and celestial hue,
The same to love he strongly was constrain'd:
But, when his mean estate he did review,
He from such hardy boldness was restrain'd,
And of his luckless lot and cruel love thus
plain'd:

"Unthankful wretch," said he, "is this the
meed¹⁰

With which her sov'reign mercy thou dost quite?"¹¹
Thy life she sav'd by her gracious deed;
But thou dost ween with villainous despite
To blot her honour and her heav'nly light:
Die; rather die than so dialoyally
Deem of her high desert, or seem so light:
Fair death it is, to shun more shame, to die.
Die; rather die than ever love dialoyally.

"But if, to love, dialoyalty it be,
Shall I then hate her that from death's door
Me brought? ah! far be such reproach from me!
What can I less do than her love therefore,
Since I her due reward cannot restore?
Die; rather die, and dying do her serve;
Dying her serve, and living her adore;
Thy life she gave, thy life she doth deserve:
Die; rather die than ever from her service
swerve.

"But, foolish boy, what boots thy service base
To her, to whom the heav'ns do serve and sue?
Thou, a mean squire of meek and lowly place;
She, heav'nly born and of celestial hue.
How then? of all Love taketh equal view:
And doth not Highest God vouchsafe to take
The love and service of the basest crew?
If she will not, die meekly for her sake:
Die; rather die than ever so fair love forsake!"

Thus warr'd he long time against his will;
Till that through weakness he was forc'd at last
To yield himself unto the mighty ill,
Which, as a victor proud, gan ransack fast
His inward parts, and all his entrails waste,
That neither blood in face nor life in heart
It left, but both did quite dry up and blast;
As piercing levin,¹² which the inner part
Of ev'ry thing consumes and calcineth by art.¹³
Which seeing, fair Belphebe gan to fear
Lest that his wound were inly not well heal'd,
Or that the wicked steel empoison'd were:

⁵ Adorned, furnished.

⁷ Pains.

⁹ Alleviation.

¹¹ Recompense.

⁶ Heal.

⁸ Bondage.

¹⁰ Reward.

¹² By necessity.

¹³ Lightning.

Little she ween'd that love he close conceal'd.
Yet still he wasted, as the snow congeal'd
When the bright sun his beams thereon doth
beat :

Yet never he his heart to her reveal'd ;
But rather chose to die for sorrow great
Than with dishonourable terms her to intreat.

She, gracious lady, yet no pains did spare
To do him ease, or do him remedy :
Many restoratives of virtues rare,
And costly cordials, she did apply,
To mitigate his stubborn malady :
But that sweet cordial, which can restore
A love-sick heart, she did to him envy ;¹
To him, and t' all th' unworthy world forlore,
She did envy that sov'reign salve in secret store.

That dainty rose, the daughter of her morn,
More dear than life she tender'd, whose flow'r
The garland of her honour did adorn :
Nor suffer'd she the midday's scorching pow'r,
Nor the sharp northern wind, thereon to show'r ;
But lapp'd up her silken leaves most chare,²
When so the froward sky began to lour ;
But, soon as calm'd was the crystal air,
She did it fair disspread and let to flourish fair.

Eternal God, in his almighty pow'r,
To make ensample of his heav'nly grace,
In Paradise whilom did plant this flow'r ;
Whence he it fetch'd out of her native place,
And did in stock of earthly flesh enrace,³
That mortal men her glory should admire.
In gentle ladies' breast and bounteous race
Of woman kind it fairest flow'r doth spire.⁴
And beareth fruit of honour and all chaste desire.

Fair imps⁵ of beauty, whose bright shining
beams

Adorn the world with like to heav'nly light,
And to your wills both royalties and realms⁶
Subdue, through conquest of your wondrous
might ;

With this fair flow'r your goodly garlands dight
Of chastity and virtue virginal,
That shall embellish more your beauty bright,
And crown your heads with heav'nly coronal,
Such as the angels wear before God's tribunál !

To your fair selves a fair ensample frame
Of this fair Virgin, this Belphebe fair ;
To whom, in perfect love and spotless fame
Of chastity, none living may compare :
Nor pois'nous envy justly can impair
The praise of her fresh flow'ring maidenhead ;
Forthy⁷ she standeth on the highest stair
Of th' honourable stage of womanhead,
That ladies all may follow her ensample dead.⁸

In so great praise of steadfast chastity,
Nathless she was so courtéous and kind,
Temper'd with grace and goodly modesty,
That seem'd those two virtues strove to find
The higher place in her heroic mind :
So striving each did other more augment,

¹ Begrudge, withhold from him.

² Chary, vigilant.

³ Plant, enroot ; French, "enraciner."

⁴ Shoot forth.

⁵ Daughters, children.

And both increas'd the praise of woman kind,
And both increas'd her beauty excellent :
So all did make in her a perfect complement.⁹

CANTO VI.

*The birth of fair Belphebe and
Of Amoret is told :
The Gardens of Adonis, fraught
With pleasures manifold.*

THE poet sets out by meeting the wonder fair
ladies must feel that "the noble damosel so great
perfections in her did compile," since she dwelt
in savage forests, "so far from Court and royal
citadel, the great schoolmistress of all courtesy."

But to this fair Belphebe in her birth
The heav'ns so favourable were and free,
Looking with mild aspect upon the earth
In th' horoscope of her nativity,
That all the gifts of grace and chastity
On her they pour'd forth of plenteous horn :
Jove laugh'd on Venus from his sov'reign sea,¹⁰
And Phoebus with fair beams did her adorn,
And all the graces rock'd her cradle being born.

"Her birth was of the womb of morning dew,
and her conception of the joyous prime ;" her
whole creation showed her "pure and unspotted
from all loathly crime that is ingenerate in fleshly
alime." Her mother was the fair Chryso-goné,
daughter of Amphisa ; a Fairy born of high degree,
who bore Belphebe and Amoretta as twins, not
borne and nurtured as other women's babes ;

But wondrously they were begot and bred
Through influence of th' heaven's fruitful ray,
As it in antique books is mention'd.
It was upon a summer's shiny day,
When Titan¹¹ fair his beams did display,
In a fresh fountain, far from all men's view,
She bath'd her breast the boiling heat t' allay ;
She bath'd with roses red and violets blue,
And all the sweetest flow'rs that in the forest
grew :

Till, faint through irksome weariness, adown
Upon the grassy ground herself she laid
To sleep, the while a gentle slumb'ring swown
Upon her fell all naked bare display'd :
The sunbeams bright upon her body play'd,
Being through former bathing mollified,
And pierc'd into her womb ; where they em-
bay'd¹²

With so sweet sense and secret pow'r unspied,
That in her pregnant flesh they shortly fructified.

Miraculous it may seem ; but reason teaches
that the seeds of all living things conceive life
and are quickened "through impression of the
sunbeams in moist complexion ;" as, after the
inundation of the Nile "infinite shapes of crea-

⁶ Realms.

⁷ Therefore.

⁸ The example which, dying, she will leave them.

⁹ Balance, completeness.

¹⁰ Seat.

¹¹ The Sun.

¹² Enclosed themselves.

tures men do find inform'd in the mud on which
the sun hath shin'd." Chrysogoné, smitten with
wonder, shame, and foul disgrace, though
conscious of innocence, fled into the wilderness,
there to rear her unwieldy burden; then, as she
rested after long travel, sleep overtook her.

It fortun'd, fair Venus having lost
Her little son, the wing'd god of love,
Who for some light displeasure, which him crost,
Was from her fled as fleet as airy dove,
And left her blissful bow'r of joy above
(So from her often he had fled away,
When she for aught him sharply did reprove,
And wander'd in the world in strange array,
Disguis'd in thousand shapes, that none might
him bewray¹);

Him for to seek, she left her heav'nly house,
The house of goodly forms and fair aspects,
Whence all the world derives the glorious
Features of beauty, and all shapes select,
With which High God his workmanship hath
deck'd;

And search'd every way through which his wings
Had borne him, or his track she might detect:
She promis'd kisses sweet, and sweeter things,
Unto the man that of him tidings to her brings.
First she him sought in Court, where most he
us'd

Whilom to haunt, but there she found him not;
But many there she found which sore accus'd
His falsehood, and with foul infamous blot
His cruel deeds and wicked wiles did spot:²
Ladies and lords she everywhere might hear
Complaining, how with his empoison'd shot
Their woeful hearts he wounded had whilom,³
And so had left them languishing 'twixt hope
and fear.

She then the cities sought from gate to gate,
And ev'ry one did ask, Did he him see?
And ev'ry one her answer'd, that too late
He had him seen, and felt the cruelty
Of his sharp darts and hot artillery:
And every one threw forth reproaches rife
Of his mischievous deeds, and said that he
Was the disturber of all civil life,
The enemy of peace, and author of all strife.

Then in the country she abroad him sought,
And in the rural cottages inquir'd;
Where also many complaints to her were brought,
How he their heedless hearts with love had fir'd,
And his false venom through their veins inspir'd;
And eke the gentle shepherd swains, which sat
Keeping their fleecy flocks, as they were hir'd,
She sweetly heard complain both how and what
Her son had to them done; yet she did smile
thereat.

But, when in none of all these she him got,
She gan advise⁴ where else he might him hide:
At last she her bethought that she had not
Yet sought the salvage woods and forests wide,
In which full many lovely nymphs abide;

1 Discover.

2 Of late.

3 Secretly.

4 Blame, asperse.

5 Consider.

6 Therefore.

'Mongst whom might be that he did closely⁵ lie,
Or that the love of some of them him tied:
Forty⁶ she thither cast her course t' apply,
To search the secret haunts of Dian's company.

Shortly unto the wasteful woods she came,
Where as she found the goddess with her crew,
After late chase of their embru'd⁷ game,
Sitting beside a fountain in a row;⁸
Some of them washing with the liquid dew
From off their dainty limbs the dusty sweat
And soil, which did deform their lively hue;
Others lay shaded from the scorching heat;
The rest upon her person gave attendance great.

She, having hung upon a bough on high
Her bow and painted quiver, had unlac'd
Her silver buskins from her nimble thigh,
And her lank⁹ loins ungirt, and breasts unbrac'd,
After her heat the breathing cold to taste;
Her golden locks, that late in tresses bright
Embraided¹⁰ were for hind'ring of her haste,
Now loose about her shoulders hung undight,¹¹
And were with sweet ambrosia all besprinkled
light.

Soon as she Venus saw behind her back,
She was asham'd to be so loose surpris'd;
And wox half wroth against her damsels slack,
That had not her thereof before advis'd,¹²
But suffer'd her so carelessly disguis'd
Be overtaken: soon her garments loose
Upgather'd, in her bosom she compris'd
Well as she might, and to the goddess rose;
While all her nymphs did like a garland her
enclose.

Goodly she gan fair Cytherea greet,
And shortly ask'd her what cause her brought
Into that wilderness for her unmeet,
From her sweet bow'rs and beds with pleasures
fraught:
That sudden change she strange adventure
thought.

To whom half weeping she thus answer'd;
That she her dearest son Cupido sought,
Who in his frowardness from her was fled;
That she repented sore to have him anger'd.

Smiling "in scorn of her vain plaint," Diana
scoffingly said that Venus might well be grieved
for the loss of her gay son, that gave her so good
aid to her disports; but Venus answered that
it ill became her to upbraid, and, with her lofty
crests, "to scorn the joy that Jove is glad to
seek; we both are bound to follow heav'n's be-
hests." Then the goddess of Love inquired if
her son had not been heard to lurk among the
cabins of Diana's nymphs, or disguise himself
like one of them; "so saying, ev'ry nymph full
narrowly she eyed."

But Phoebe therewith sore was anger'd,
And sharply said; "Go, Dame; go, seek your
boy,

Where you him lately left, in Mars his bed:
He comes not here; we scorn his foolish joy,

7 Wet with blood.

8 Row.

9 Slender.

10 Braided.

11 Loose, undone.

12 Warned.

Nor lend we leisure to his idle toy :
But, if I catch him in this company,
By Stygian lake I vow, whose sad annoy
The gods do dread, he dearly shall aby :¹
I'll clip his wanton wings, that he no more shall
fly."

Whom when as Venus saw so sore displeas'd,
She inly sorry was, and gan relent
What she had said : so her she soon appeas'd
With sugar'd words and gentle blandishment,
Which as a fountain from her sweet lips went
And well'd goodly forth, that in short space
She was well pleas'd, and forth her damsels sent
Through all the woods, to search from place to
place
If any track of him or tidings they might trace.

Diana herself went with Venus "to seek the
fugitive both far and near;" and the pair came
upon the fair Chrysogoné, who, in her sleep,
"unwares had borne two babes as fair as spring-
ing day." "Unwares she them conceiv'd, un-
wares she bore; she bore withouten pain, that
she conceiv'd withouten pleasure." The god-
desses, after an interval of speechless wonder-
ment, agreed not to awake the sleeper, "but
from her loving side the tender babes to take."
Phoebe carried one to a nymph, "to be upbrought
in perfect maidenhead," and named her Bel-
phoebe; Venus took the other far away, "to
be upbrought in goodly womanhead," and called
her Amoretta, to comfort herself for the absence
of her little son.

She brought her to her joyous Paradise,²
Where most she wons³ when she on earth does
dwell,

So fair a place as Nature can devise :
Whether in Paphos, or Cithéron hill,
Or it in Onidus be, I wot⁴ not well ;
But well I wot by trial, that this same
All other pleasant places doth excel,
And call'd is, by her lost lover's name,
The Garden of Adonis,⁵ far renown'd by fame.

In that same garden all the goodly flow'rs
Wherewith Dame Nature doth her beautify,
And decks the garlands of her paramours,
Are fetch'd : there is the first seminary
Of all things that are born to live and die,
According to their kinds. Long work it were
Here to account the endless progeny
Of all the weeds⁶ that bud and blossom there ;
But so much as doth need must needs be counted⁷
here.

¹ Suffer for it.

² The word is here used in its original sense of any
garden or pleasure-ground; Greek, *παράδεισος*, re-
presenting the Sanscrit "paradesa."

³ Resides.

⁴ Know.

⁵ Adonis represents the reproductive principle of
existence, the operation of which was typified in his
alternate sojourn of half the year with Proserpine and
half with Venus—half in the region of darkness and
decay, half in the region of fructifying light and fertile
life. The Garden of Adonis, or rather the Garden of
Venus where Adonis lives in eternal bliss, is described
as containing the seminal principle of all things—in
harmony with the Lucretian philosophy, as indicated in

It sited⁸ was in fruitful soil of old,
And girt in with two walls on either side,
The one of iron, th' other of bright gold,
That none might thorough break, nor overstride :
And double gates it had which open'd wide,
By which both in and out men mighten pass ;
Th' one fair and fresh, the other old and dried :
Old Genius the porter of them was,
Old Genius, the which a double nature has.⁹

He letteth in, he letteth out, to wend,¹⁰
All that to come into the world desire :
A thousand thousand naked babes attend
About him day and night, which do require
That he with fleshly weeds would them attire :
Such as him list, such as eternal fate
Ordain'd hath, he clothes with sinful mire,¹¹
And sendeth forth to live in mortal state,
Till they again return back by the hinder gate.

After that they again return'd been,
They in that Garden planted be again,
And grow afresh, as they had never seen
Fleshly corruption nor mortal pain :
Some thousand years so do they there remain,
And then of him are clad with other hue,¹²
Or sent into the changeable world again,
Till thither they return where first they grew :
So, like a wheel, around they run from old to
new.

Nor needs there gardener to set or sow,
To plant or prune; for of their own accord
All things, as they created were, do grow,
And yet remember well the mighty word
Which first was spoken by th' Almighty Lord,
That bade them to increase and multiply :
Nor do they need with water of the ford,¹³
Or of the clouds, to moisten their roots dry ;
For in themselves eternal moisture they imply.¹⁴

Infinite shapes of creatures there are bred,
And uncouth forms, which none yet ever knew :
And ev'ry sort is in a sundry bed
Set by itself, and rank'd in comely row ;¹⁵
Some fit for reasonable souls t' indue ;¹⁶
Some made for beasts, some made for birds to
wear ;

And all the fruitful spawn of fishes' hue¹⁷
In endless ranks along enrang'd were,
That seem'd the ocean could not contain them
there.

Daily they grow, and daily forth are sent
Into the world, it to replenish more ;
Yet is the stock not lessen'd nor spent,
But still remains in everlasting store
As it at first created was of yore :

the invocation to "Alma Venus," with which the first
book "De Rerum Natura" opens.

⁶ To be here understood of plants generally, not
merely of such as are noxious or useless.

⁷ Recounted.

⁸ Situated.

⁹ In the twelfth canto of the second book (page 404),
the porter at the gate of Acrasia's Bower is also called
Genius, but with express distinction from "that cele-
stial Power, to whom the care of life, and generation of
all that lives, pertains in charge particular." Genius
here is the protecting deity of birth; from "geno,"
"gignere," to bring forth.

¹² Aspect, shape.

¹³ Stream.

¹⁴ Contain.

¹⁵ Row, order.

¹⁶ Put on.

¹⁷ Form, nature.

For in the wide womb of the world there lies,
In hateful darkness and in deep horror,
A huge eternal Chaos, which supplies
The substances of Nature's fruitful progenies.

All things from thence do their first being fetch,
And borrow matter whereof they are made ;
Which, when as form and feature it does ketch,¹
Becomes a body, and doth then invade
The state of life out of the grisly shade.
That substance is etern, and bideth so ;
Nor, when the life decays, and form does fade,²
Doth it consume and into nothing go,
But chang'd is, and often alter'd to and fro.

The substance is not chang'd nor alter'd,
But th' only³ form and outward fashion ;
For ev'ry substance is condition'd
To change her hue, and sundry forms to don,
Meet for her temper and complexion :
For forms are variable, and decay
By course of kind⁴ and by occasion ;⁵
And that fair flow'r of beauty fades away,
As doth the lily fresh before the sunny ray.

Great enemy to it, and t' all the rest
That in the Garden of Adonis springs,
Is wicked Time ; who, with his scythe addrest,⁶
Does mow the flow'ring herbs and goodly things,
And all their glory to the ground down flings,
Where they do wither and are foully marr'd :
He flies about, and with his flaggy wings
Beats down both leaves and buds without regard,
Nor ever pity may relent his malice hard.

Yet pity often did the gods relent,
To see so fair things marr'd and spoil'd quite :
And their great mother Venus did lament
The loss of her dear brood, her dear delight :
Her heart was pierc'd with pity at the sight,
When, walking through the garden, them she
saw,
Yet n'ot⁷ she find redress for such despite :
For all that lives is subject to that law :
All things decay in time, and to their end do
draw.

But, were it not that Time their troubler is,
All that in this delightful Garden grows
Should happy be, and have immortal bliss :
For here all plenty and all pleasure flows ;
And sweet Love gentle fits⁸ amongst them
throws,

Without fell rancour or fond jealousy :
Frankly each paramour his leman⁹ knows ;
Each bird his mate ; nor any does envy
Their goodly merriment and gay felicity.

There is continual spring, and harvest there
Continual, both meeting at one time :
For both the boughs do laughing blossoms bear,
And with fresh colours deck the wanton prime,¹⁰
And eke at once the heavy trees they climb,
Which seem to labour under their fruit's load :

¹ Catch, obtain.

² Only the.

⁴ Accident, force of circumstance.

⁵ Armed.

⁷ Emotions, impulses.

⁹ Spring.

³ Nature.

⁶ Knew not how, could not.

⁸ Mistress.

¹⁰ Covered.

The while the joyous birds make their pastime
Amongst the shady leaves, their sweet abode,
And their true loves without suspicion tell
abroad.

Right in the midst of that Paradise
There stood a stately mount, on whose round top
A gloomy grove of myrtle trees did rise,
Whose shady boughs sharp steel did never lop,
Nor wicked beasts their tender buds did crop ;
But like a garland compass'd the height,
And from their fruitful sides sweet gum did drop,
That all the ground, with precious dew bedight,¹¹
Threw forth most dainty odours and most sweet
delight.

And in the thickest covert of that shade
There was a pleasant arbour, not by art,
But of the trees' own inclination, made,
Which, knitting their rank branches part to
part,

With wanton ivy-twine entrail'd athwart,¹²
And eglantine and caprifole¹³ among,
Fashion'd above within their inmost part,
That neither Phoebus' beams could through
them throng,
Nor Æolus' sharp blast could work them any
wrong.

And all about grew every sort of flow'r
To which sad lovers were transform'd of yore ;
Fresh Hyacinthus, Phoebus' paramour
And dearest love ;
Foolish Narciss', that likes the watery shore ;
Sad Amaranthus, made a flow'r but late,
Sad Amaranthus, in whose purple gore
Me seems I see Amintas' wretched fate,¹⁴
To whom sweet poet's verse hath given endless
date.

There wont fair Venus often to enjoy
Her dear Adonis' joyous company,
And reap sweet pleasure of the wanton boy :
There yet, some say, in secret he does lie,
Lapp'd in flow'rs and precious spicery,
By her hid from the world, and from the skill
Of Stygian gods, which do her love envy ;
But she herself, whenever that she will,
Possesseth him, and of his sweetness takes her
fill :

And sooth, it seems, they say ; for he may not
For ever die, and ever buried be
In baleful night, where all things are forgot ;
All¹⁵ be he subject to mortality,
Yet is etern in mutability,
And by succession made perpetual,
Transform'd oft, and chang'd diversely :
For him the father of all forms they call ;
Therefore needs must he live, that living gives
to all.

There now he liveth in eternal bliss,
Joying his goddess, and of her enjoy'd ;

¹¹ Twined across.

¹² Woodbine ; "caprifolium periclymenum."

¹³ Sir Phillip Sydney, mortally wounded at Zutphen,
is understood to be meant by Amintas ; though the
same title is applied to the Earl of Derby, in "Colin
Clout's Come Home Again."

¹⁴ Although.

Nor feareth he henceforth that foe of his,
Which with his cruel tusk him deadly cloy'd :¹
For that wild boar, the which him once annoy'd,
She firmly hath imprison'd for aye
(That her sweet love his malice might avoid),
In a strong rocky cave, which is, they say,
Hewn underneath that mount, that none him
loosen may.

There now he lives in everlasting joy ;
With many of the gods in company
Which thither haunt, and with the wing'd boy
Sporting himself in safe felicity :
Who, when he hath with spoils and cruelty
Ransack'd the world, and in the woeful hearts
Of many wretches set his triumphs high,
Thither resorts, and, laying his sad darts
Aside, with fair Adonis plays his wanton parts.
And his true love, fair Psyche, with him plays ;
Fair Psyche to him lately reconcil'd,
After long troubles and unmeet upbrays,²
With which his mother Venus her revil'd,
And eke himself her cruelly exil'd :
But now in steadfast love and happy state
She with him lives, and hath him borne a child,
Pleasure, that doth both gods and men aggrate,³
Pleasure, the daughter of Cupid and Psyche late.

Hither Venus brought Chrysogoné's younger
daughter, committing her to Psyche, to be fos-
tered and trained in true femininity ; and Psyche
tendered her charge no less carefully than her
own daughter Pleasure, whom she made her
companion. When Amoretta had grown to
perfect ripeness, "of grace and beauty noble
paragon," Psyche brought her forth into the
world's view, "to be th' ensample of true love
alone, and lodestar of all chaste affection," to
all fair ladies. Coming to Faery Court, on Sir
Scudamour alone her love she cast, and for his
sake endured "sore sore trouble of a heinous
enemy ;" but the poet, on the plea that his
reader must desire to know the fate of that
fearful damsel Florimell, waives for the moment
the story of Amoretta.

CANTO VII.

*The witch's son loves Florimell :
She flies ; he feigns to die,
Satyrane saves the Squire of Dames
From giant's tyranny.*

As a solitary hind, that has escaped from a
ravenous beast, "yet flies away of her own feet
afear'd," her terror increased by every leaf that
shakes with the least murmur of wind—so fled
Florimell all night ; and her white palfrey,
having wrested the reins from her weary hand,
carried her whither he pleased. At length, all

¹ Pierced.

² Gratify, charm.

³ Balance.

⁴ Any one against whom she bore a grudge.

⁵ Charm, contrivance.

⁶ Upbraidings.

⁷ Garments.

jeopardy past, his strength failed, and he lay
down motionless. Forced to alight and fare
on foot, Florimell was now taught by need the
lesson hard and rare, "That Fortune all in
equal lance⁴ doth sway ; and mortal miseries
doth make her play." At length the maiden
reached a little valley, under a hill's side, all
covered with thick woods ; and through the
tree-tops she descried "a little smoke, whose
vapour thin and light reeking aloft uproll'd
to the sky."

There in a gloomy hollow glen she found
A little cottage, built of sticks and reeds
In homely wise, and wall'd with sods around ;
In which a witch did dwell, in loathly weeds⁵
And wilful want, all careless of her needs ;
So choosing solitary to abide
Far from all neighbours, that her devilish deeds
And hellish arts from people she might hide,
And hurt far off unknown whomever she envied.⁶

Entering, the damsel found the hag seemingly
busy "about some wicked gin ;"⁷ but, at sight
of the visitor, she "lightly upstart'd from the
dusty ground," and stared on her in speechless
amazement. The prayer of the damsel for
shelter from the storm checked the witch's fast-
rising wrath ; few trickling tears, "that like
two orient pearls did purely shine upon her
snowy cheek," completed the conquest ; and
the vile hag set about comforting and soothing
the maid, who was "as glad of that small rest,
as bird of tempest gone." When Florimell
had arranged her rent garments and her loose
locks, the hostess was so struck by her beauty,
that, taking her for a goddess, or one of Diana's
crew, she "thought her to adore with humble
sprite ; t' adore thing so divine as beauty were
but right." "At undertime"⁸ the witch's son,
"a lazy loord,"⁹ for nothing fit to don," came
home, and was dazzled by the beauty of the
stranger, as one that has gazed on the bright
sun unawares. His mother answered his ques-
tions with naught but ghastly looks ; but the
fair Virgin "to their senses vild"¹⁰ her gentle
speech applied, that in short space she grew
familiar in that desert place." The sluggish
son, however, "conceiv'd affection base, and
cast to love her in his brutish mind ;" but he
had not the courage to utter his desire, and
strove to show his love by sighs, and signs, and
kind attentions.

Oft from the forest wildings¹¹ he did bring,
Whose sides empurpled were with smiling red ;
And oft young birds, which he had taught to sing
His mistress' praises sweetly caroll'd :
Garlands of flow'rs sometimes for her fair head
He fine would dight ;¹² sometimes the squirrel
wild
He brought to her in bands, as conquer'd

⁸ Time of "undern ;" evening or dinner-time.

⁹ Debased, ignoble fellow ; the word is akin to, or
derived from, the French, "lourd," heavy, dull.

¹⁰ Vile, depraved.

¹¹ Wild or crab apples.

¹² Prepare.

To be her thrall, his fellow-servant vild :
All which she of him took with count'nance
meek and mild.

But, after a time, for fear of mischief by the
witch or her son, Florimell resolved to leave
that desert mansion ; and, secretly harnessing
her now well-rested palfrey, she stole away ere
the day broke. Great was the moan made by
the witch and her son when they discovered her
escape ; but the son especially grieved, beating
his breast and tearing his flesh, as if frenzy-
stricken. Finding all her tears and charms in-
effectual to comfort him, she " by her devilish
arts thought to prevail to bring her back again,
or work her final bale."¹

Eftsoons out of her hidden cave she call'd
A hideous beast of horrible aspect,
That could the stoutest courage have appall'd ;
Monstrous, misshap'd, and all his back was
speck'd

With thousand spots of colours quaint elect ;²
Thereto³ so swift that it all beasts did pass :
Like never yet did living eye detect ;
But likest it to a hyena was,
That feeds on women's flesh as others feed on
grass.

It forth she call'd, and gave it strait in charge
Through thick and thin her to pursue apace,
Nor once to stay to rest, or breathe at large,
Till her he had attain'd and brought in place,⁴
Or quite devour'd her beauty's scornful grace.
The monster, swift as word that from her went,
Went forth in haste, and did her footing trace
So sure and swiftly, through his perfect scent
And passing speed, that shortly he her over-
hent.⁵

Sore terrified, the damsel fled fast, till her
fleet palfrey gave in, as she approached the sea-
shore ; then, lightly leaping from her dull horse,
she continued the flight on foot.

Not half so fast the wicked Myrrha⁶ fled
From dread of her revenging father's hand ;
Nor half so fast, to save her maidenhead,
Fled fearful Daphne⁷ on th' Ægean strand,
As Florimell fled from that monster yond,⁸
To reach the sea ere she of him were raught :⁹
For in the sea to drown herself she fand,¹⁰
Rather than of the tyrant to be caught :
Thereto fear gave her wings, and need her
courage taught.

It fortun'd (High God did so ordain)
As she arriv'd on the roaring shore,
In mind to leap into the mighty main,
A little boat lay hovering¹¹ her before,
In which there slept a fisher old and poor,
The while his nets were drying on the sand :
Into the same she leapt, and with the oar

¹ Cause her death.

³ Besides.

⁵ Overtook.

⁶ The mother of Adonis—who was the fruit of her
unnatural passion for her father, Cinyras, King of
Cyprus.

⁷ See note 12, page 37.

² Strangely chosen.

⁴ To that place.

Did thrust the shallop from the floating
strand :¹²

So safety found at sea, which she found not at
land.

The baffled monster, to revenge himself, set
upon Florimell's abandoned palfrey, " and slew
him cruelly ere any rescue came ; "

And after having him embowell'd,
To fill his hellish gorge, it chanc'd a knight
To pass that way, as forth he travell'd :
It was a goodly swain, and of great might,
As ever man that bloody field did fight ;
But in vain shows, that wont young knights
bewitch,

And courtly services, took no delight ;
But rather joy'd to be than seemen sich :¹³
For both to be and seem to him was labour lich.¹⁴

It was, to wit, the good Sir Satyrane,
That rang'd abroad to seek adventures wild,
As was his wont, in forest and in plain :
He was all arm'd in rugged steel unfill'd,¹⁵
As in the smoky forge it was compil'd,¹⁶
And in his scutcheon bore a satyr's head :
He coming present, where the monster vild
Upon that milk-white palfrey's carcase fed,
Unto his rescue ran, and greedily¹⁷ him sped.

Recognising the palfrey of Florimell, he was
struck with fear lest any evil should have be-
fallen that lady, whom he dearly loved ; " be-
sides, her golden girdle, which did fall from
her in flight, he found, that did him sore appal."
Fiercely he attacked the beast, but could not
kill him ; so, hurling his sword away, he lightly
leapt upon the monster, that roared and raged
to be underkept, and heaped strokes upon him.

As he that strives to stop a sudden flood,
And in strong banks his violence restrain,
Forceth it swell above his wonted mood,
And largely overflow the fruitful plain,
That all the country seems to be a main,¹⁸
And the rich furrows float, all quite fordome :¹⁹
The woeful husbandman doth loud complain
To see his whole year's labour lost so soon,
For which to God he made so many an idle boon.²⁰

At last the beast submitted ; and, since the
witch's charms made steel powerless to slay him,
Satyrane bound him with Florimell's golden
girdle. " Thus as he led the beast along the
way," Sir Satyrane spied a mighty giantess, on
a courser dappled gray, flying fast from a bold
knight ; and lying athwart her horse was a
doleful squire, bound hand and foot, " whom
she did mean to make the thrall of her desire."
Leaving his captive beast at liberty, Satyrane
turned against the giantess, who, throwing
aside her load, addressed herself to fight.

Like as a gohawk, that in foot doth bear

⁸ Furious. See note 10, page 389.

⁹ Reached.

¹¹ Heaving.

¹³ Seem such.

¹⁵ Unpolished.

¹⁷ Eagerly.

¹⁹ Ruined.

¹⁰ Preferred.

¹² Floating from the strand.

¹⁴ Like.

¹⁶ Wrought.

¹⁸ Sea.

²⁰ Prayer.

A trembling culver,¹ having spied on height
 An eagle that with plummy wings doth shear
 The subtile air, stooping with all his might,
 The quarry² throws to ground with fell despite,
 And to the battle doth herself prepare :
 So ran the giantess unto the fight ;
 Her fiery eyes with furious sparks did stare,
 And with blasphemous banns³ High God in
 pieces tare.

She caught in hand a huge great iron mace,
 Wherewith she many had of life depriv'd ;
 But, ere the stroke could seize his aimed place,⁴
 His spear amidst her sun-broad shield arriv'd ;
 Yet nathemore the steel asunder riv'd,
 All⁵ were the beam in bigness like a mast,
 Nor her out of the steadfast saddle driv'd ;
 But, glancing on the temper'd metal, brast⁶
 In thousand shivers, and so forth beside her
 past.

Her steed did stagger with that puissant stroke ;
 But she no more was mov'd with that might,
 Than it had lighted on an aged oak
 Upon the top of mount Olympus' height,
 Or on the marble pillar that is pight⁷
 For the brave youthly champions to assay
 With burning chariot wheels it nigh to smite ;
 But who that smites it mars his joyous play,
 And is the spectacle of ruinous decay.⁸

The enraged giantess dealt her adversary such
 a blow on the helmet, that he was stunned, and
 reeled in his saddle ; then she seized him by the
 collar, plucked him out of his wavering seat,
 laid him across her horse, and rode away. But
 the pressure of her original pursuer obliged her
 to drop the burden. By and by, Sir Satyrane
 came to his senses, and, after making moan for
 his misadventure, spied the helpless squire
 whom he had rescued.

To whom approaching, well he might perceive
 In that foul plight a comely personage
 And lovely face, made fit for to deceive
 Frail ladies' hearts with love's consuming rage ;
 Now in the blossom of his freshest age :
 He rear'd him up, and loos'd his iron bands,
 And after gan inquire his parentage,
 And how he fell into that giant's hands,
 And who that was which chas'd her along the
 lands.

The squire informed him that the giantess was
 Arganté, begot, by incest, of the Titan Typhoeus
 and his own mother Earth. Another babe she
 bore at the same birth, the mighty Olyphant,⁹
 with whom Arganté lived in sin ; but, not con-
 tent with this, she plunged into frightful pro-
 fligacy, and sought all over the country for
 young men, whom she brought into a secret
 island, where they must either die in eternal
 bondage, or serve her pleasures. The squire,

¹ Pigeon.

³ Curses. See note 8, page 135.

⁴ Attain its aim.

⁶ Broke.

⁷ Placed—as the goal in the Olympian chariot-races ;
 Horace's "meta fervidis evitata rotis."

⁸ Defeat, injury.

² Prey.

⁵ Although.

caught at vantage by Arganté, was being borne
 to her prison ; but he would rather, he said,
 have died a thousand deaths, than break the
 vow he had plighted to fair Columbell. "As
 for my name, it mistereth not¹⁰ to tell ; call
 me the Squire of Dames ; that me becometh
 well." The knight chasing the giantess was a
 fair virgin, famous in arms, named Palladine ;
 and none might match that monster "but she,
 or such as she, that is so chaste a wight."
 Asked to tell what vow he had taken, the squire
 said that his lady had imposed on him, as a task
 by which he might gain her favour, the charge
 to wander through the world at will, doing every-
 where service to gentle dames, whose names and
 pledges he was to bring back at the end of a
 year.

"So well I to fair ladies service did,
 And found such favour in their loving hearts,
 That, ere the year his course had compass'd,
 Three hundred pledges for my good desarts,¹¹
 And thrice three hundred thanks for my good
 parts,

I with me brought, and did to her present :
 Which when she saw, more bent to eke my
 smarta¹²

Than to reward my trusty true intent,
 She gan for me devise a grievous punishment ;

"To wit, that I my travel should resume,
 And with like labour walk the world around,
 Nor ever to her presence should presume,
 Till I so many other dames had found,
 The which, for all the suit I could propound,
 Would me refuse their pledges to afford,
 But did abide for ever chaste and sound."

"Ah ! gentle Squire," quoth he, "tell, at one
 word,
 How many found'st thou such to put in thy
 record ?"

"Indeed, Sir Knight," said he, "one word may
 tell

All that I ever found so wisely staid,¹³
 For only three they were dispos'd so well ;
 And yet three years I now abroad have stray'd,
 To find them out." "Might I," then laughing
 said

The Knight, "inquire of thee what were those
 three,

The which thy proffer'd courtesy denay'd ?¹⁴

Or ill they seem'd sure advis'd to be,
 Or brutishly brought up, that ne'er did fashions
 see."

"The first which then refus'd me," said he,
 "Certes was but a common courtesane ;
 Yet flat refus'd to have ado with me,
 Because I could not give her many a jane."¹⁵
 (Thereat full heartily laugh'd Satyrane.)

"The second was a holy nun to choose,
 Which would not let me be her chappellane,¹⁶

⁹ See note 24, page 147 ; and canto xi. of the present
 book, page 437.

¹¹ Deserts.

¹³ Steadfast, constant.

¹⁰ There is no occasion or need.

¹² Add to my pain.

¹⁴ Denied.

¹⁵ A jane was a Genoese coin of small value ; here
 the word is used generally for any coin.

¹⁶ Chaplain.

Because she knew, she said, I would disclose
Her counsel, if she should her trust in me repose.

"The third a damsel was of low degree,
Whom I in country cottage found by chance :
Full little ween'd I that chastity
Had lodging in so mean a maintenance ;¹
Yet was she fair, and in her countenance
Dwelt simple truth in seemly fashion :
Long thus I woo'd her with due observance,
In hope unto my pleasure to have won ;
But was as far at last, as when I first begun.

"Save her, I never any woman found
That chastity did for itself embrace,
But were for other causes firm and sound ;
Either for want of handsome² time and place,
Or else for fear of shame and foul disgrace.
Thus am I hopeless ever to attain
My lady's love, in such a desperate case,
But all my days am like to waste in vain,
Seeking to match the chaste with th' unchaste
ladies' train."³

"Pardie,"⁴ said Satyrane, "thou Squire of
Dames,
Great labour fondly⁵ hast thou hent in hand,⁶
To get small thanks, and therewith many
blames ;
That may amongst Alcides' labours stand."
Thence back returning to the former land⁷
Where late he left the beast he overcame,
He found him not ; for he had broke his band,
And was return'd again unto his dame,
To tell what tidings of fair Florimell became.

CANTO VIII.

*The witch creates a snowy la-
dy like to Florimell ;*

*Who, wrong'd by Carl,⁸ by Proteus sav'd,
Is sought by Paridell.*

WHEN the malicious witch saw the beast return
with Florimell's golden girdle, she rejoiced at
the supposed destruction of the maiden, and
ran with the token to her son, thinking to
remove his grief by showing the hopelessness of
his love. But the youth only sorrowed with
fresh fury ; and he would have slain his mother,
"had she not fled into a secret mew,"⁹ where
she was wont her sprites to entertain." Calling
to her aid those "masters of her art," she con-
jured them to devise some means of healing for
her son, whose senses were decayed ; and by
their advice and her own wicked wit she
boldly took in hand to make "another Flori-
mell, in shape and look so lively, and so like,
that many it mistook."

The substance, whereof she the body made,

¹ Condition.

² Convenient.

³ That is, to find a number of chaste ladies equal to
the number of the unchaste.

⁴ Truly.

⁵ Foolishly.

⁶ Undertaken.

⁷ Place.

⁸ Churl ; the witch's son.

⁹ Hiding-place, den.

¹⁰ A range of mountains in the remote north, of

Was purest snow in massy mould congeal'd,
Which she had gather'd in a shady glade
Of the Rhipoean hills,¹⁰ to her reveal'd
By errant sprites, but from all men conceal'd :
The same she temper'd with fine mercury
And virgin wax that never yet was seal'd,
And mingled them with perfect vermily ;¹¹
That like a lively sanguine it seem'd to the eye.

Instead of eyes two burning lamps she set
In silver sockets, shining like the skies,
And a quick moving spirit did arret¹²
To stir and roll them like two women's eyes :
Instead of yellow locks she did devise
With golden wire to weave her curl'd head :
Yet golden wire was not so yellow thrice¹³
As Florimell's fair hair : and, in the stead
Of life, she put a sprite to rule the carcass dead ;
A wicked sprite, y-fraught with fawning guile
And fair resemblance above all the rest,
Which with the Prince of Darkness fell some-
while¹⁴

From heaven's bliss and everlasting rest :
Him needed not instruct which way were best
Himself to fashion likest Florimell,
Nor how to speak, nor how to use his gest ;¹⁵
For he in counterfeisance¹⁶ did excel,
And all the wiles of women's wits knew passing
well.

Him shap'd thus she deck'd in garments gay,
Which Florimell had left behind her late ;
That whoso then her saw, would surely say
It was herself whom it did imitate,
Or fairer than herself, if aught algate¹⁷
Might fairer be. And then she forth her brought
Unto her son, that lay in feeble state ;
Who, seeing her, gan straight upstart, and
thought
She was the lady's self whom he so long had
sought.

Joyously embracing the fancied Florimell,
the youth quickly recovered, and resumed his
courtship—though, the better to seem what
she was named, she "coily rebutted his em-
bracement light." On a day, as he walked the
woods "with that his idol fair," he encountered
"proud Braggadocio, that in vaunting vain
his glory did repose and credit did maintain."
Marvelling to see with that churl so fair a wight,
he "thought that match a foul disparagement,"
and at spear's point compelled the silly clown
to surrender the lady, whom the victor mounted
on Trompart's steed and proudly led away.
When safe from pursuit, Braggadocio began to
woo her ; but soon they met "an arm'd knight
upon a courser strong, whose trampling feet
upon the hollow lay¹⁸ seem'd to thunder."
The stranger, "with bold words and bitter
threat," bade Braggadocio surrender the lady,

which the ancients knew but vaguely, and which they
sometimes called the Mountains of the Hyperboreans.

¹¹ Vermillion.

¹² Appoint.

¹³ One-third so yellow.

¹⁴ Long before.

¹⁵ What deportment to use.

¹⁶ Counterfeiting.

¹⁷ In any way.

¹⁸ Lea, level land.

or else fight for her. The boaster, though quaking with fear, answered with words of vaunting defiance; and the stranger, waxing highly wroth, bade him turn his steed, on pain of death.

"Since, then," said Braggadocio, "needs thou wilt

Thy days abridge, through proof of puissance,
Turn we our steeds; that both in equal tilt
May meet again, and each take happy chance."
This said, they both a furlong's mountenance¹
Retir'd their steeds, to run in even race:
But Braggadocio with his bloody lance,
Once having turn'd, no more return'd his face,
But left his love to loss, and fled himself apace.

Disdaining to pursue, the knight took the dame from Trompart, and rode away with fairest Florimell; for so he deemed her, "and so herself did always to her tell; so made him think himself in heav'n, that was in hell."

But Florimell herself was far away,
Driven to great distress by fortune strange,
And taught the careful mariner to play,
Since late mischance had her compell'd to change
The land for sea, at random there to range:
Yet there that cruel Queen avengeress,²
Not satisfied so far her to estrange
From courtly bliss and wonted happiness,
Did heap on her new waves of weary wretchedness.

For, being fled into the fisher's boat
For refuge from the monster's cruelty,
Long so she on the mighty main did float,
And with the tide drove forward carelessly;
For th' air was mild, and clear'd was the sky,
And all his winds Dan³ Æolus did keep
From stirring up their stormy enmity,
As pitying to see her wail and weep;
But all the while the fisher did securely sleep.

When, "drunk with drowsiness," he awoke,
"and saw his drover⁴ drive along the stream,"
he was dismayed; but other thoughts arose at sight of the lady. He began "to look on her fair face and mark her snowy skin;" and soon he rudely assaulted her honour. She struggled strongly both with hand and foot, till Heaven, out of "sovereign favour toward chastity," sent succour. As she stiffly strove, and importuned the wide sea with shrilling shrieks, "Proteus abroad did rove, along the foamy waves driving his finny drove."

Proteus is shepherd of the seas of yore,
And hath the charge of Neptune's mighty herd;
An aged sire with head all frowy⁵ hoar,
And sprinkled frost upon his dewy beard:
Who, when those pitiful outcries he heard
Through all the seas so ruefully resound,
His chariot swift in haste he thither steer'd,
Which, with a team of scaly phocas⁶ bound,
Was drawn upon the waves, that foam'd him around.

Coming to the boat, and seeing a sight that smote him with indignation and pity, Proteus haled the villain "from his hop'd prey," and beat him soundly with "his staff, that drives his herd astray." Florimell, all soiled and tear-stained, looked up at her deliverer, but "for shame, and more for fear of his grim sight, down in her lap she hid her face, and foully shrigh't."⁷

Herself not sav'd yet from danger dread
She thought, but chang'd from one to other fear:
Like as a fearful partridge, that is fled
From the sharp hawk which her attach'd near,⁸
And falls to ground to seek for succour there,
Where as the hungry spaniels she does spy
With greedy jaws her ready for to tear:
In such distress and sad perplexity
Was Florimell, when Proteus she did see her by.

But Proteus, with speeches mild, strove to comfort and reassure her.

Her up betwixt his rugged hands he rear'd,
And with his frory⁹ lips full softly kist,
While the cold icicles from his rough beard
Dropp'd adown upon her ivory breast:
Yet he himself so busily addrest,
That her out of astonishment he wrought;
And, out of that same fisher's filthy nest
Removing her, into his chariot brought,
And there with many gentle terms her fair besought.

The "old lecher" he tied behind his chariot, dragging him through the waves, and afterwards casting him up upon the shore; "but Florimell with him unto his bower¹⁰ he bore."

His bow'r is in the bottom of the main,
Under a mighty rock 'gainst which do rave
The roaring billows in their proud disdain,
That with the angry working of the wave
Therein is eaten out a hollow cave,
That seems rough mason's hand with engines
keen
Had long while labour'd it to engrave:¹¹
There was his won;¹² nor living wight was seen
Save one old nymph, hight Panopé, to keep it clean.

Thither he brought the sorry Florimell,
And entertain'd her the best he might
(And Panopé her entertain'd eke well),
As an immortal might a mortal wight,
To win her liking unto his delight:
With flatt'ring words he sweetly woo'd her,
And offer'd fair gifts t' allure her sight;
But she both offers and the offerer
Despis'd, and all the fawning of the flatterer.

Daily he tempted her with this or that,
And never suffer'd her to be at rest:
But evermore she him refus'd flat,
And all his feign'd kindness did detest;
So firmly she had seal'd up her breast.
Sometimes he boasted that a god he hight;

¹ Distance.

² Fate.

³ Lord; from Latin, "Dominus."

⁴ Boat.

⁵ Or "frowy;" mossy, rugged, untidy.

⁶ Seals.

⁷ Shrieked.

⁸ Nearly seized.

⁹ Frozen.

¹⁰ Abode.

¹¹ Cut out.

¹² Dwelling.

But she a mortal creature lov'd best :
Then he would make himself a mortal wight ;
But then she said she lov'd none but a Faery knight.

Then like a Faery knight himself he drest ;
For ev'ry shape on him he could indue :
Then like a king he was to her exprest,
And offer'd kingdoms unto her in view,
To be his leman¹ and his lady true :
But, when all this he nothing saw prevail,
With harder means he cast² her to subdue,
And with sharp threats her often did assail ;
So thinking for to make her stubborn courage quail.

To dreadful shapes he did himself transform :
Now like a giant ; now like to a fiend ;
Then like a centaur ; then like to a storm
Raging within the waves : thereby he ween'd
Her will to win unto his wish'd end :
But when with fear, nor favour, nor with all
He else could do, he saw himself esteem'd,
Down in a dungeon deep he let her fall,
And threaten'd there to make her his eternal thrall.

Eternal thralldom was to her more lief³
Than loss of chastity, or change of love :
Die had she rather in tormenting grief,
Than any should of falseness her reprove,
Or looseness, that she lightly did remove.⁴
Most virtuous Virgin ! glory be thy meed,
And crown of heav'nly praise with saints above,
Where most sweet hymns of this thy famous deed

Are still amongst them sung, that far my rhymes exceed.

"Fit song of angels caroll'd to be !" exclaims the poet, as reluctantly he leaves the maiden in this woeful plight, to tell of Satyrane and the Squire of Dames. Having ended a long discourse of the Squire's adventures vain, "the which himself than ladies more defames," the pair returned from vain pursuit of the hyena, and met a knight whom Satyrane recognised as Sir Paridell, "both by the burning heart which on his breast he bare, and by the colours in his crest." Asked for tidings, Paridell answered that Faery Court had been thrown into mourning by "the late ruin of proud Marinell," and the sudden departure of Florimell, in quest of whom all the brave knights had gone. Satyrane then informed him that his labour all was lost, for Florimell might be accounted dead ; and told how he had seen her palfrey slain by a monstrous beast, and had "found her golden girdle cast astray, distain'd with dirt and blood, as relic of the prey." Paridell admits that "the signs be sad," but will not forsake his quest "till trial do more certain truth bewray." Satyrane promises that he will not be behind the other searchers.

¹ Mistress.

³ Preferable.

⁴ Change her affection.

⁶ Restore.

⁸ In company.

² Designed, tried.

⁵ Labour.

⁷ Way.

⁹ Know.

"Ye noble knights," said then the Squire of Dames,

"Well may ye speed in so praiseworthy pain !⁵
But, since the sun now gins to slake his beams
In dewy vapours of the western main,
And loose the team out of his weary wain,
Might not mislike you also to abate
Your zealous haste, till morrow next again
Both light of heav'n and strength of men
relate :⁶

Which if ye please, to yonder castle turn your gate."⁷

That counsel pleas'd well ; so all y-fere⁸
Forth march'd to a castle them before ;
Where soon arriving they restrain'd were
Of ready entrance, which ought evermore
To errant knights be common : wondrous sore
Thereat displeas'd they were, till that young
Squire

Gan them inform the cause why that same door
Was shut to all which lodging did desire :
The which to let you weet⁹ will farther time
require.

CANTO IX.

Malbecco will no strange knights host,¹⁰

For peevish jealousy :

Paridell jousts with Britomart :

Both show their ancestry.

THE poet makes apology to the "redoubted knights and honourable dames," to whom he levels all his labour's end, for writing of a wanton lady ; but reminds them that good more clearly appears by the contrast of evil, and that even in heaven a whole legion of angels fell. He proceeds to tell why the knights found so inhospitable reception at the castle. Therein, said the Squire of Dames, dwelt a cankered crabbed carl, uncourteous and heedless what men said of him, ill or well, and setting all his mind on mucky pelf. Yet was he linked to a lovely lass, wholly incompatible with him in years and dispositions, joying to play among her peers, hating hard restraints and jealous fears. Suspicious of her truth, her one-eyed husband mewed her closely up, and suffered nobody to approach her. "Malbecco¹¹ he, and Hellenore she hight, unfitley yok'd together in one team ;" and the husband's jealousy denied admittance to all knights that came that way. Smiling, Satyrane pronounced the man extremely mad who thought "with watch and hard constraint to stay a woman's will which is disposed to go astray."¹²

"In vain he fears that which he cannot shun :
For who wots¹³ not, that woman's subtilties

¹⁰ Entertain.

¹¹ The Cuckold.

¹² Chaucer, in the passage in *The Manciple's Tale*, which Spenser evidently follows, had declared the attempt "to keep a shrew" to be a "very nicety."

¹³ Knows.

Can guilen¹ Argus, when she list misdo'n?²
It is not iron banda, nor hundred eyes,
Nor brazen walls, nor many wakeful spies,
That can withhold her wilful-wand'ring feet;
But fast good will, with gentle courtesies,
And timely service to her pleasures meet,
May her perhaps contain³ that else would
algates fleet."⁴

But Paridell asked if he was not more mad
who had sold himself to such service; "for
sure a fool I do him firmly hold, that loves his
fettters, though they were of gold." They re-
solved first to exhaust gentle means of gaining
entrance, before resorting to force; and Paridell,
knocking softly, requested admittance of "the
goodman self, which then the porter play'd."
He answered that all were gone to rest, and the
keys were in the chamber of the master, whom
he durst not awake. Threats were tried, to no
purpose; and now a terrible storm of rain and
hail drove the applicants to take shelter in a
little swine-shed beside the gate. By and by,
another knight, repelled from the inhospitable
door of the castle, came also to the shed for
shelter; but its occupants refused to admit the
new comer. Enraged, he defied them all, till
Paridell, overcoming his reluctance to fighting
in the dark, issued forth to the combat, like a
long-encaged wind that, escaping, "confounds
both land and seas, and skies doth overcast."
The two knights rode together with impetuous
rage and force, and both were unhorsed. Pari-
dell, though sore bruised, was eager to continue
the fight on foot; but Satyrane made peace,
and all combined against the castle's lord, to
burn his gates with unquenchable fire, and slay
himself.

Malbecco seeing them resolv'd in deed
To flame the gates, and hearing them to call
For fire in earnest, ran with fearful speed,
And, to them calling from the castle wall,
Besought them humbly him to bear withal,
As ignorant of servants' bad abuse
And slack attendance unto strangers' call.
The knights were willing all things to excuse,
Though naught believ'd, and entrance late did
not refuse.

They be y-brought into a comely bow'r,
And serv'd of all things that might needful be;
Yet secretly their host did on them lour,
And welcom'd more for fear than charity;
But they dissembled what they did not see,
And welcom'd themselves. Each gan undight
Their garments wet, and weary armour free,
To dry themselves by Vulcan's flaming light,
And eke their lately bruised parts to bring in
plight.⁵

¹ Deceive.

² Pleases to do wrong.

³ Restrain.

⁴ Would by whatever way, at any hazard, flee (in pur-
suit of her own will).

⁵ Heal.

⁶ When her helmet was taken off.

⁷ Braids.

⁸ Reached.

⁹ Gone, dispersed.

¹⁰ Piercing through the air. ¹¹ Coat of mail.

¹² Well-folded.

¹³ Was wont.

¹⁴ Slender.

¹⁵ (Formerly) unknown.

And eke that stranger knight amongst the rest
Was for like need enfore'd to disarray:
Then, when as vail'd was her lofty crest,⁶
Her golden locks, that were in trammels⁷ gay
Upbounden, did themselves adown display,
And raught⁸ unto her heels; like sunny beams,
That in a cloud their light did long time stay,
Their vapour vaded,⁹ show their golden gleams,
And through the perant air¹⁰ shoot forth their
azure streams.

She also doff'd her heavy habergeon,¹¹
Which the fair feature of her limbs did hide;
And her well-plighted¹² frock, which she did
won¹³

To tuck about her short when she did ride,
She low let fall, that flow'd from her lank¹⁴ side
Down to her foot with careless modesty.
Then of them all she plainly was espied
To be a woman-wight, unwist¹⁵ to be;
The fairest woman-wight that ever eye did see.
Like as Bellona (being late return'd
From slaughter of the giants conquer'd;
Where proud Encelade,¹⁶ whose wide nostrils
burn'd

With breath'd flames like to a furnace red,
Transfix'd with her spear down tumbled dead
From top of Hæmus by him heap'd high)
Hath loos'd her helmet from her lofty head,
And her Gorgonian¹⁷ shield gins to untie
From her left arm, to rest in glorious victory.

All the rest were smitten with great amaze-
ment and admiration at the disclosure; their
hungry view could not be satisfied, "but, see-
ing, still the more desired to see;" and, between
her beauty and her prowess, "ev'ry one her
lik'd, and ev'ry one her lov'd." Even Paridell
was won out of his discontent for "his late fall
and foul indignity." Soon supper was pre-
pared; and all prayed Malbecco of courtesy
that they might have the company of his wife.

But he, to shift their curious request,
Gan causen¹⁸ why she could not come in place;¹⁹
Her craz'd²⁰ health, her late recourse to rest,
And humid evening ill for sick folk's case:
But none of those excuses could take place;²¹
Nor would they eat, till she in presence came:
She came in presence with right comely grace,
And fairly them saluted, as became,
And show'd herself in all a gentle courteous
dame.

They sat to meat; and Satyrane his chance
Was her before, and Paridell beside;
But he himself²² sat looking still askance
'Gainst Britomart, and ever closely ey'd
Sir Satyrane, that glances might not glide:
But his blind eye, that sided²³ Paridell,

¹⁶ Enceladus; one of the Titans, who was killed by
a thunderbolt of Zeus, or by Athena—not, as the poet
says, by Bellona's spear.

¹⁷ Having upon it the Gorgon's head, which turned
all beholders to stone. Spenser transfers its owner-
ship from Athena to Bellona.

¹⁸ Began to explain, make excuses.

¹⁹ Be present.

²⁰ Broken, impaired.

²¹ Have effect.

²² Malbecco.

²³ Was on the side of.

All his demeanour from his sight did hide :
On her fair face so did he feed his fill,
And sent close¹ messages of love to her at will :
And ever and anon, when none was ware,
With speaking looks, that close embassy²
bore,

He rov'd³ at her, and told his secret care ;
For all that art he learn'd had of yore :
Nor was she ignorant of that lewd lore,
But in his eye his meaning wisely read,
And with the like him answer'd evermore :
She sent at him one fiery dart, whose head
Empoison'd was with privy lust and jealous
dread.

He from that deadly throw made no defence,
But to the wound his weak heart open'd wide :
The wicked engine, through false influence,
Pass'd through his eyes, and secretly did glide
Into his heart, which it did sorely gride.⁴
But nothing new to him was that same pain ;
Nor pain at all ; for he so oft had tried
The power thereof, and lov'd so oft in vain,
That thing of course he counted, love to enter-
tain.

Thenceforth to her he sought to intimate
His inward grief, by means to him well known :
Now Bacchus' fruit out of the silver plate
He on the table dash'd, as overthrown,
Or of the fruitful liquor overflown ;
And by the dancing bubbles did divine,
Or therein write to let his love be shown ;
Which well she read out of the learned line :
A sacrament profane in mystery of wine.

And, whenso of his hand the pledge she raught,⁵
The guilty cup she feign'd to mistake,
And in her lap did shed her idle draught,
Showing desire her inward flame to slake.
By such close signs they secret way did make
Unto their wills, and one eye's watch escape :
Two eyes him needeth, for to watch and wake,
Who lovers will deceive. Thus was the ape,
By their fair handling, put into Malbecco's cape.⁶

"Now when of meats and drinks they had
their fill," Hellenora requested the knights to
tell their deeds of arms, their kindred and their
names. Paridell, glad to commend himself to
the dame, traced his descent from Paris, "most
famous worthy of the world, by whom the war
was kindled which did Troy inflame." Long
before the siege, while yet a shepherd on Mount
Ida, Paris "on fair CEnone got a lovely boy,"
whom she named Paris. He, after the ruin of
the city, "gather'd the Trojan relics saved from
flame, and, with them sailing thence, to th'
isle of Paros came."

"That was by him call'd Paros, which before
Hight Nausa ; there he many years did reign,
And built Nausiclé by the Pontic shore ;

The which he, dying, left next in remain
To Paridas his son,
From whom I Paridell by kin descend :
But, for fair ladies' love and glory's gain,
My native soil have left, my days to spend
In suing⁷ deeds of arms, my life's and labour's
end."

Much moved by the story of the nation from
which she was herself lineally extracted—"for
noble Britons sprung from Trojans bold, and
Troynovant⁸ was built of old Troy's ashes cold"
—Britomart asked Paridell to tell the fortunes
of Æneas after his escape from the "city's woe-
ful fire ;" and Paridell related his wanderings and
sufferings, before his arrival and settlement in
Latium, and the foundation of the Roman realm.

"There, there," said Britomart, "afresh ap-
pear'd

The glory of the later world to spring,
And Troy again out of her dust was rear'd
To sit in second seat of sov'reign king
Of all the world, under her governing.
But a third kingdom yet is to arise
Out of the Trojans' scatter'd offspring,
That, in all glory and great enterprise,
Both first and second Troy shall dare to equalise.

"It Troynovant is hight, that with the waves
Of wealthy Thamis wash'd is along,
Upon whose stubborn neck (whereat he raves
With roaring rage, and sore himself does throng,
That all men fear to tempt his billows strong),
She fasten'd hath her foot : which stands so high,
That it a wonder of the world is sung
In foreign lands ; and all which passen by,
Beholding it from fardo think it threatens the sky."⁹

"The Trojan Brute did first that city found,
And High-gate made the meer¹⁰ thereof by west,
And Overt-gate by north : that is the bound
Toward the land ; two rivers bound the rest.
So huge a scope¹¹ at first him seem'd best,
To be the compass of his kingdom's seat :
So huge a mind could not in lesser rest,
Nor in small meers contain his glory great,
That Albion had conquer'd first by warlike feat."

Paridell now, entreating the "fairest Lady-
Knight" to pardon his heedless oversight, recited
what he had once "heard tell from aged Mne-
mon:" that of the old Trojan stock there had
grown "another plant, that raught⁵ to wondrous
height, and far abroad his mighty branches
threw," even to the world's utmost corner. For
that same Brute, Mnemon had said, was the
son of Sylvius ; who, having by accident slain
his father, fled to sea with a youthly train, and,
after many adventures, conquered Britain from
its original inhabitants—"a huge nation of the
giant's brood, that fed on living flesh, and
drunk men's vital blood."

¹ Secret.

² Secret embassy.

⁴ Wound, pierce.

⁶ Hood. To put an ape into one's hood, upon one's
head, is to befool him ; the phrase is employed by
Chaucer in the prologue to *The Prioress's Tale* (page 144).

³ Shot.

⁵ Reached.

⁷ Pursuing.

⁸ London ; New Troy.

⁹ The reference may be either to the Tower of Lon-
don, or—more probably—to Old London Bridge, and
the lofty piles of building upon it.

¹⁰ Boundary.

¹¹ Extent.

"His work great Troynovant, his work is eke
Fair Lincoln, both renown'd far away;
That who from East to West will endlong¹ seek,
Cannot two fairer cities find this day,
Except Cleopolis; so heard I say
Old Mnemon: therefore, Sir, I greet you well
Your country kin;² and you entirely pray
Of pardon for the strife, which late befell
Betwixt us both unknown." So ended Paridell.

But, all the while that he these speeches spent,
Upon his lips hung fair Dame Hellenore
With vigilant regard and due attent,³
Fashioning worlds of fancies evermore
In her frail wit, that now her quite forlore:⁴
The while unware away her wond'ring eye
And greedy ears her weak heart from her bore:
Which he perceiving, ever privily,
In speaking, many false belgards⁵ at her let
fly.

So long these knights discours'd diversely
Of strange affairs, and noble hardiment,⁶
Which they had pass'd with mickle jeopardy,
That now the humid night was farforth spent,
And heav'nly lamps were halfendeal y-brent:⁷
Which th' old man seeing well, who too long
thought

Ev'ry discourse, and ev'ry argument,
Which by the hours he measur'd, besought
Them go to rest. So all unto their bow'rs were
brought.

CANTO X.

*Paridell rapeth Hellenore;
Malbecco her pursues:
Finds amongst Satyrs, whence with him
To turn she doth refuse.*

IN the morning, Britomart and Satyrane left
the castle; but Paridell, pleading the hurts re-
ceived in his encounter with the Virgin Knight,
stayed behind—much to the discontent of Mal-
becco, who did not let his wife out of his sight
by night or by day.

But Paridell kept better watch than he,
A fit occasion for his turn to find.
False Love! why do men say thou canst not see,
And in their foolish fancy feign thee blind,
That with thy charms the sharpest sight dost
bind,

And to thy will abuse? Thou walkest free,
And seest ev'ry secret of the mind;
Thou seest all, yet none at all sees thee:
All that is by the working of thy deity.

So perfect in that art was Paridell,
That he Malbecco's halfen eye⁸ did wile;
His halfen eye he wil'd wondrous well,

¹ From end to end.

² On the relationship of your country with mine.

³ Attention.

⁴ Sweet looks.

⁵ Half burned out.

⁶ Secretly.

⁷ Skilful, practised.

⁸ Accuse.

⁹ Forsook.

¹⁰ Deeds of bravery.

¹¹ Single eye.

¹² Know.

¹³ Could not.

¹⁴ Violation of hospitality.

And Hellenore's both eyes did eke beguile,
Both eyes and heart at once, during the while
That he there sojourn'd his wounds to heal;
That Cupid self, it seeing, close⁹ did smile
To weet¹⁰ how he her love away did steal,
And bade that none their joyous treason should
reveal.

The learned¹¹ lover lost no time nor tide
That least advantage might to him afford,
Yet bore so fair a sail, that none espied
His secret drift till he her laid aboard.
Whenso in open place and common board
He fortun'd her to meet, with common speech
He courted her; yet baited ev'ry word,
That his ungentle host n'ot¹² him appeach¹³
Of vile ungentleness or hospitage's breach.¹⁴

But when apart (if ever her apart
He found) then his false engines fast he plied,
And all the sleights unbosom'd in his heart:
He sigh'd, he sobb'd, he swoon'd, he pardie¹⁵ died,
And cast himself on ground her fast beside:
Then, when again he him bethought to live,
He wept, and wail'd, and false laments belied,¹⁶
Saying, but if¹⁷ she mercy would him give,
That he might algates¹⁸ die, yet did his death
forgive.

And other whiles with amorous delights
And pleasing toys he would her entertain;
Now singing sweetly to surprise her sprites,
Now making lays of love and lovers' pain,
Branles,¹⁹ ballada, virelays, and verses vain;
Oft purposes,²⁰ oft riddles, he devis'd,
And thousands like which flow'd in his brain,
With which he fed her fancy, and entic'd
To take to his new love, and leave her old
despis'd.

And ev'ry where he might and ev'ry while
He did her service dutiful, and sued
At hand with humble pride and pleasing guile;
So closely yet, that none but she it view'd,
Who well perceiv'd all, and all indu'd.²¹
Thus finely did he his false nets disspread,
With which he many weak hearts had subdued
Of yore, and many had alike miald:
What wonder then if she were likewise carri'd?

Soon Hellenora "her love and heart hath
wholly sold" to the treacherous guest; and all
is arranged for an elopement.

Dark was the ev'ning, fit for lovers' stealth,
When chanc'd Malbecco busy be elsewhere,
She to his closet went, where all his wealth
Lay hid; thereof she countless sums did rear,²²
The which she meant away with her to bear;
The rest she fir'd, for sport or for despite:
As Helen, when she saw aloft appear
The Trojan flames, and reach to heaven's height,
Did clap her hands, and joy'd at that doleful
sight;

¹⁵ Truly.

¹⁶ Unless.

¹⁷ Feigned.

¹⁸ Certainly.

¹⁹ Airs for the dance called "bransel," "bransle," or "brawl," wherein a number of people joined hands and moved in a ring.

²⁰ Conversations.

²¹ Accepted.

²² Lift take away.

The second Helen, fair Dame Hellenore,
The while her husband ran with sorry haste
To quench the flames which she had tin'd¹
before,
Laugh'd at his foolish labour spent in waste,²
And ran into her lover's arms right fast;
Where strait embrac'd, she to him did cry
And call aloud for help, ere help were past;
For lo! that guest did bear her forcibly,
And meant to ravish her, that rather had to die!

The wretched man, hearing her call for aid,
And ready seeing him with her to fly,
In his disquiet mind was much dismay'd:
But when again he backward cast his eye,
And saw the wicked fire so furiously
Consume his heart, and scorch his idol's face,³
He was therewith distress'd diversely,
Nor wist he how to turn, nor to what place:
Was never wretched man in such a woeful case.

Ay when to him she cried, to her he turn'd,
And left the fire; love, money overcame:
But, when he mark'd how his money burn'd,
He left his wife; money did love disclaim:
Both was he loth to lose his lov'd dame,
And loath to leave his liefest⁴ pelf behind;
Yet, since he no't⁵ save both, he sav'd that same
Which was the dearest to his dunghill mind,
The god of his desire, the joy of misers blind.

While all was in uproar, the lovers, under the
safe-conduct of "Night, the patroness of love-
stealth fair," fled at ease; leaving Malbecco to
rave, and stamp, and cry, and chew the cud of
inward grief. At last he resolved to hide part
of his treasure, to bear the rest secretly with
him, and, in the garb of a poor pilgrim, to seek
his wife whereso she might be found. But all
his search was vain; the "woman was too wise
ever to come into his clutch again," and he
too simple ever to surprise the jolly Paridell.
In his wanderings he encountered Braggadocio
and Trompart; and, by the display of his trea-
sure, he induced the braggart, "the whole
world's common remedy," to swear by Sangla-
mort his sword that the lady should be sent back
and the ravisher chastised. Malbecco, deceived
by the bombast of the pretentious pair, joyfully
believed the thing as good as done; and the
three travelled long together, "through many
a wood and many an uncouth way"—Bragga-
docio and his crafty squire really seeking only
an opportunity to deprive their companion of his
treasure. At last they met Paridell himself,
who, having filched the pleasures of the dame,
had cast her up to the wide world, and let her
fly alone; for he would not be clogged; "so
had he serv'd many one."

The gentle lady, loose at random left,
The green-wood long did walk, and wander wide
At wild adventure, like a fórlorn weft;⁶
Till on a day the Satyrs her espied

Straying alone withouten groom or guide:
Her up they took, and with them home her led,
With them as housewife ever to abide,
To milk their goats, and make them cheese and
bread;
And ev'ry one as common good her handel'd:

So that she had soon forgotten both Malbecco
and Paridell. When Malbecco saw the ravisher
of his wife, "he fainted, and was almost dead
with fear;" at last he summoned courage to
inquire for Hellenora. But Paridell lightly
answered, "I take no keep⁷ of her; she won-
neth⁸ in the forest there before;" and forth
he rode on new adventure—some convenient
derangement in his horse's harness giving Brag-
gadocio a pretext for letting him pass un-
punished. Malbecco, greatly disquieted by the
thought that his wife may be devoured by wild
beasts, wished to enter the forest at once; but
Trompart, working on his avarice by tales of
robbers, induced him to leave his treasure be-
hind, "buried in the ground for jeopardy."

Now when amid the thickest woods they were,
They heard a noise of many bagpipes shrill,
And shrieking hubbubs them approaching near,
Which all the forest did with horror fill:
That dreadful sound the boaster's heart did
thrill

With such amazement, that in haste he fled,
Nor ever look'd back for good or ill;
And after him eke fearful Trompart sped:
The old man could not fly, but fell to ground
half dead:

Yet afterwards, close creeping as he might,
He in a bush did hide his fearful head.
The jolly Satyrs, full of fresh delight,
Came dancing forth, and with them nimbly led
Fair Hellenore, with garlands all bespread,
Whom their May-lady they had newly made:
She, proud of that new honour which they read,⁹
And of their lovely fellowship full glade,¹⁰
Danc'd lively, and her face did with a laurel
shade.

The silly man, that in the thicket lay,
Saw all this goodly sport, and griev'd sore;
Yet durst he naught against it do or say,
But did his heart with bitter thoughts engore,¹¹
To see th' unkindness of his Hellenore.
All day they danc'd with great lustihead,¹²
And with their horn'd feet the green grass
wore;
The while their goats upon the browses¹³ fed,
Till drooping Phœbus gan to hide his golden
head.

Then up they gan their merry pipes to truss,¹⁴
And all their goodly herds did gather round;
But every Satyr first did give a buss¹⁵
To Hellenore; so busses did abound.
Now gan the humid vapour shed the ground
With pearly dew, and th' earth's gloomy shade

¹ Kindled.² Thrown away.⁴ Best loved.⁶ Wail.³ His wealth.⁵ Could not.⁷ Heed, thought.⁸ Dwelleth.¹⁰ Glad.¹² Pleasure.¹⁴ Lift.⁹ Showed.¹¹ Pierced.¹³ Pasture, herbage.¹⁵ Kiss.

Did dim the brightness of the welkin round,
That ev'ry bird and beast awarn'd made¹
To shroud² themselves, while sleep their senses
did invade.

Which when Malbecco saw, out of the bush
Upon his hands and feet he crept full light,
And like a goat amongst the goats did rush;
That, through the help of his fair horns³ on
height,

And misty damp of misconceiving night,
And eke through likeness of his goatish beard,
He did the better counterfeit aright:
So home he march'd amongst the horn'd herd,
That none of all the Satyrs him espied or heard.

At night he saw his lovely wife lie among
them, "embrac'd of a Satyr rough and rude,"
who gave the husband cruel cause of jealousy.
Creeping to her side when her companion slept,
Malbecco sought to induce her to return with
him, promising that all should be forgiven; but
she flatly refused, and "chose amongst the jolly
Satyrs still to won."⁴

He woo'd her till day-spring he espied;
But all in vain: and then turn'd⁵ to the herd,
Who butted him with horns on ev'ry side,
And trod down in the dirt, where his hoar beard
Was foully dight,⁶ and he of death afear'd.
Early, before the heaven's fairest light
Out of the ruddy East was fully rear'd,
The herds out of their folds were loos'd quite,
And he amongst the rest crept forth in sorry
plight.

So soon as he the prison-door did pass,
He ran as fast as both his feet could bear,
And never look'd who behind him was,
Nor scarcely who before: like as a bear,
That, creeping close amongst the hives to rear⁷
A honey-comb, the wakeful dogs espy,
And him assailing sore his carcase tear,
That hardly he with life away does fly,
Nor stays, till safe himself he see from jeopardy.

Nor stay'd he, till he came unto the place
Where late his treasure he entomb'd had;
Where when he found it not (for Trompart base
Had it purloin'd for his master bad),
With extreme fury he became quite mad,
And ran away; ran with himself away:
That who so strangely had him seen bestad,⁸
With upstart hair and staring eyes dismay,⁹
From Limbo Lake him late escap'd sure would
say.

High over hills and over dales he fled,
As if the wind him on his wings had borne;
Nor bank nor bush could stay him, when he sped
His nimble feet, as treading still on thorn:
Grief, and Despair, and Jealousy, and Scorn,

Did all the way him follow hard behind;
And he himself himself loath'd so forlorn,¹⁰
So shamefully forlorn of woman kind:
That, as a snake, still lurk'd in his wounded
mind.

Still fled he forward, looking backward still;
Nor stay'd his flight nor fearful agony
Till that he came unto a rocky hill
Over the sea suspended dreadfully,
That living creature it would terrify
To look adown, or upward to the height:
From thence he threw himself despiteously,
All desperate of his foredamn'd sprite,¹¹
That seem'd no help for him was left in living
sight.

But, through long anguish and self-murd'ring
thought,

He was so wasted and forpin'd¹² quite,
That all his substance was consum'd to naught,
And nothing left but like an airy sprite;
That on the rocks he fell so flit¹³ and light,
That he thereby receiv'd no hurt at all;
But chanc'd on a craggy cliff to light;
Whence he with crooked claws so long did crawl,
That at the last he found a cave with entrance
small:

Into the same he creeps, and thenceforth there
Resolv'd to build his baleful mansion,
In dreary darkness, and continual fear
Of that rock's fall, which ever and anon
Threats with huge ruin him to fall upon,
That he dare never sleep, but that one eye
Still ope he keeps for that occasion;
Nor ever rests he in tranquillity,
The roaring billows beat his bow'r¹⁴ so boist'-
rously.

Nor ever is he wont on aught to feed
But toads and frogs, his pasture poisonous,
Which in his cold complexion do breed
A filthy blood, or humour rancorous,
Matter of doubt and dread suspicious,
That doth with cureless care consume the heart,
Corrupts the stomach with gall vicious,
Cross-cuts the liver with internal smart,
And doth transfix the soul with death's eternal
dart.

Yet can he never die, but dying lives,
And doth himself with sorrow new sustain,
That death and life at once unto him gives,
And painful pleasure turns to pleasing pain.
There dwells he ever, miserable swain,
Hateful both to himself and ev'ry wight;
Where he, through privy grief and horror vain,
Is waxen so deform'd, that he has quite
Forgot he was a man, and Jealousy is hight.

¹ Gave warning.
² The badge of the cuckold.
⁴ Dwell.
⁶ Soiled.
⁸ Bestead.
¹⁰ Abandoned.

³ Shelter.
⁵ Returned.
⁷ Carry away.
⁹ Dismayed.

¹¹ His spirit tormented before its time.
¹² Pined away.
¹³ Fleeting, unsubstantial; so that he but skimmed
the surface. To "fleet" milk, in some parts of Eng-
land, is to skim off the cream.
¹⁴ Abode.

CANTO XI.

*Britomart chaseth Olyphant ;
Finds Scudamour distrest ;
Assays the House of Busirane,
Where Love's spoils are exprest.*

O HATEFUL hellish snake ! what Fury first
Brought thee from baleful house of Proserpine,
Where in her bosom she thee long had nurst,
And foster'd up with bitter milk of tine ;¹
Foul Jealousy ! that turnest love divine
To joyless dread, and mak'st the loving heart
With hateful thoughts to languish and to pine,
And feed itself with self-consuming smart ;
Of all the passions in the mind thou vilest art !

O let him far be banish'd away,
And in his stead let Love for ever dwell !
Sweet Love, that doth his golden wings embay²
In bless'd nectar and pure pleasure's well,
Untroubled of vile fear or bitter fell.³
And ye, fair ladies, that your kingdoms make
In th' hearts of men, them govern wisely well,
And of fair Britomart ensample take,
That was as true in love as turtle to her make.⁴

Britomart and Satyrane, riding from Malbecco's house, espied a young man in hasty flight from the giant Olyphant, whose profligacy exceeded, if possible, that of his sister Arganté. They pricked against him, and he fled "swift as any roe," fearing not Satyrane, but Britomart, the flower of chastity ; "for he the pow'r of chaste hands might not bear." The giant hid himself in a forest, into which his pursuers followed him ; but in the search they were separated. Britomart by and by came to a fountain, beside which lay a knight "all wallow'd upon the grassy ground," with his armour cast aside, and "a little off his shield was rudely thrown, on which the wing'd boy⁵ in colours clear depainted was." The Virgin shrank from awakening him out of seeming slumber ; but soon she heard him groan, and sob, and break forth into bitter complaint for the captivity of Amoretta, his lady and his love, whom for seven months Busirane with wicked hand had cruelly penned in secret den. She was kept "in doleful darkness from the view of day," while her chaste breast was rent by torments, "and the sharp steel did rive her heart in tway," because she would not renounce the love of Scudamour. Struck with pity, Britomart touched him gently, and sought to comfort him by the promise of aid against the wicked felon who had outraged him and thrall'd his gentle mate. Scudamour replies that it is useless to bewail what cannot be redressed, "and sow vain sorrow in a fruitless ear ;" then explains that his lady is in the hands of a tyrant, who, "by strong enchantments and black magic lear," has shut her close in a dungeon, guarded

by many fiends. There she is tormented most terribly by night and by day with mortal pain ; yet she cannot be constrained "love to conceive in her disdainful breast" for the enchanter. Britomart promises that she "will, with proof of last extremity deliver her from thence, or with her for you die ;" and Scudamour is persuaded to reassume "his arms, which he had vowed to disprofess."⁶ Soon the pair arrive before the castle of the enchanter, which is but a bowshot distant.

There they dismounting drew their weapons bold,

And stoutly came unto the castle gate,
Where as no gate they found them to withhold,
Nor ward to wait at morn and ev'ning late ;
But in the porch, that did them sore amate,⁷
A flaming fire y-mix'd with smouldry smoke
And stinking sulphur, that with grialy hate
And dreadful horror did all entrance choke,
Enforc'd them their forward footing to revoke.⁸

Britomart was greatly dismayed and perplexed, and asked Scudamour, "What monstrous enmity provoke we here ?" The Knight replied that the fire, by force of mighty enchantments, could not be quenched or removed away ; and he besought the Maid to cease her fruitless pains. But Britomart held it shameful to abandon the enterprise on the mere show of peril.

Therewith, resolv'd to prove her utmost might,
Her ample shield she threw before her face,
And her sword's point directing forward right,
Assail'd the flame ; the which eftsoons gave place,
And did itself divide with equal space,
That through she pass'd ; as a thunder-bolt
Pierceth the yielding air, and doth displace
The soaring clouds into sad show'rs y-molt ;⁹
So to her yold¹⁰ the flames, and did their force revolt.¹¹

Scudamour vainly attempted to follow ; the fire only burned more fiercely ; and at last, giving up the enterprise, he threw himself on the grass in a paroxysm of impatient grief. Meanwhile the championess had entered "the outmost room, and pass'd the foremost door ; the utmost room abounding with all precious store."

For, round about, the walls y-cloth'd were
With goodly arras¹² of great majesty,
Woven with gold and silk so close and near,
That the rich metal lurk'd privily,
As feigning to be hid from envious eye ;
Yet here, and there, and ev'rywhere, unware
It show'd itself and shone unwillingly ;
Like a discolour'd¹³ snake, whose hidden snares
Through the green grass his long bright burnish'd back declares.

And in those tapets¹⁴ weren fashioned

¹ Or "teen ;" anguish, woe.
² Bathe. ³ Gall, melancholy. ⁴ Mate.
⁵ Cupid. The Knight is Sir Scudamore, or Scudamour ; the name signifying "the Shield of Love." See Scudamour's story in canto x., book iv.

⁶ Forswear. ⁷ Alarm, discomfit.
⁸ To retire. ⁹ Molten, melted.
¹⁰ Yielded. ¹¹ Turn back.
¹² Tapestry. ¹³ Parti-coloured.
¹⁴ Tapestry worked with figures.

Many fair portraits, and many a fair feat;
And all of love, and all of lustihead,¹
As seem'd by their semblance, did entreat:²
And eke all Cupid's wars they did repeat,
And cruel battles, which he whilom fought
'Gainst all the gods, to make his empire great;
Besides the huge massacres which he wrought
On mighty Kings and Kaisers into thralldom
brought.

Therein was writ how often thund'ring Jove³
Had felt the point of his heart-piercing dart,
And, leaving heaven's kingdom, here did rove
In strange disguise, to slake his scalding smart;⁴
Now, like a ram, fair Helle to pervart,⁵
Now, like a bull, Europa⁶ to withdraw:
Ah, how the fearful lady's tender heart
Did lively seem to tremble, when she saw
The huge seas under her t' obey her servant's
law!

Soon after that, into a golden shower
Himself he chang'd, fair Danaë⁷ to view;
And through the roof of her strong brazen tower
Did rain into her lap a honey-dew;
The while her foolish guard, that little knew
Of such deceit, kept th' iron door fast barr'd,
And watch'd that none should enter nor issue;
Vain was the watch, and bootless all the ward,
When as the god to golden hue himself trans-
ferr'd.⁸

Then was he turn'd into a snowy swan,
To win fair Leda⁹ to his lovely trade:¹⁰

¹ Pleasure.

² Treat.

³ Spenser's description of the tapestry in the House of Busirane is paraphrased from Ovid's account of the web woven by the Mæonian maid Arachne in her contest of skill with Minerva. (See note 10, page 384.) The passage may be cited for the sake of comparison:

"Mæonis elusam designat imagine tauri
Europen; verum taurum, freta vera putares.
Ipse videbatur terras spectare relictas,
Et comites clamare suas, tactumque vereri
Assillentis aquæ, timidæque reducere plantas.
Fecit et Asterien aquilâ luctante teneri;
Fecit olorinis Ledam recubare sub alis:
Addidit, ut satyri celatus imagine pulchram
Jupiter implevit gemino Nyctæida fœtu;
Amphitryon fuerit, cum te, Tirynthia, cepit:
Aureus ut Danaen, Asopida luserit igneus:
Mnemosynen pastor: varius Deoida serpens.
Te quoque mutatum torvo, Neptune, juvenco,
Virgine in Æoliâ posuit. Tu visus Enipeus
Gignis Aloidæ: aries Bisaltida fallis.
Et te, flava comas, frugum mitissima mater,
Sensit equum: te sensit avem crinita colubris
Mater equi volucris: sensit Delphina Melantho.
Omnibus his faciemque suam, faciemque locorum
Reddidit. Est illic agrestis imagine Phœbus;
Utque modo accipitris pennas, modo terga leonis
Gesserit; ut pastor Macareida luserit Issen.
Liber ut Erigonen falsâ deceiverit uvâ;
Ut Saturnus equo geminum Chirona creavit.
Ultima pars telæ, tenui circumdata limbo,
Nexilibus flores hederis habet intertextos."

—Metam., vi., 103–128.

⁴ Allay the burning pain of love.

⁵ Seduce, carry off. Helle, according to fable, was drowned in the sea now called the Hellespont, by falling off the golden-fleeced ram on which her mother Nephele was flying for refuge to Colchis with her two children, Helle and Phrixus. Spenser, by error or design, confounds the story of the golden ram with one of Jove's many transformations.

⁶ Daughter of Agenor king of Phœnicia; she was carried away to Crete by Jupiter, disguised in the form of a lovely and tame bull, on whose back Europa mounted as she was sporting with her maidens by the

O wondrous skill, and sweet wit of the man,
That her in daffodillies sleeping made,
From scorching heat her dainty limbs to shade!
While the proud bird, ruffling his feathers wide,
And brushing his fair breast, did her invade,¹¹
She slept; yet 'twixt her eyelids closely¹² spied
How toward her he rush'd, and smiled at his
pride.

Then show'd it how the Theban Semelê,
Deceiv'd of jealous Juno,¹³ did require
To see him in his sov'reign majesty,
Arm'd with his thunderbolts and lightning fire;
Whence dearly she with death bought her desire.
But fair Alcmena¹⁴ better match did make,
Joying his love in likeness more entire:
Three nights in one they say that for her sake
He then did put, her pleasures longer to partake.

Twice was he seen in soaring eagle's shape,
And with wide wings to beat the buxom¹⁵ air:
Once, when he with Asteria¹⁶ did scape;
Again, when as the Trojan boy so fair¹⁷
He snatch'd from Ida hill, and with him bare:
Wondrous delight it was there to behold
How the rude shepherds after him did stare,
Trembling through fear lest down he fallen sho'ld,
And often to him calling to take surer hold.

In Satyr's shape Antiopé he snatch'd;
And like a fire, when he Ægin' assay'd:¹⁸
A shepherd, when Mnemosyne¹⁹ he catch'd;
And like a serpent to the Thracian maid.²⁰

sea-shore. The story is beautifully told in Horace, Odes, iii. 27.

⁷ Danaë was the daughter of Acrisius, king of Argos; who confined her in a brazen tower, because an oracle had foretold that she would bear a son who would kill his father. But Jupiter obtained access to her prison, either by the transformation described in the text, or by the more prosaic method of bribing the guard; and the result was the birth of Perseus, who, grown to manhood, killed his grandfather at the public games by the accidental blow of his quoit.

⁸ Transformed to the semblance or shape of gold.

⁹ Wife of Tyndareus, king of Sparta; Jupiter courted her under the form of a swan, and she became the mother of Castor and Pollux.

¹⁰ Amorous commerce with him.

¹¹ Approach, attack.

¹² Secretly.

¹³ Juno, jealous of Semele, appeared to her under the form of her old nurse, and persuaded her to ask Jupiter to visit her in the same splendour and majesty in which his own queen knew him. Despite Jupiter's warning of her danger, Semele persisted, and her wish was granted; but she was consumed by the lightnings of the god—who, however, saved her son, Dionysus or Bacchus.

¹⁴ Wife of Amphitryon king of Thebes, and mother of Hercules. See note 28, page 261.

¹⁵ Yielding.

¹⁶ Sister of Latona and mother of Hecate; to escape from the love of Jupiter she changed herself into a quail, and threw herself down from heaven to earth.

¹⁷ Ganymede, brother of Assaracus the founder of the Trojan realm. He was the most beautiful of mortal men, and Zeus carried him off to be his cup-bearer.

¹⁸ Antiopé and Ægina were daughters of the river-god Asopus, in Boeotia; the first became by Zeus the mother of Amphion and Zethus, the second of Æacus. Ægina was carried off to the island that now bears her name; and, as it was unpeopled, Zeus changed the abounding ants into men (Myrmidones), over whom Æacus might rule.

¹⁹ Daughter of Uranus (Heaven) and mother of the Muses. See note 4, page 357.

²⁰ Deia, or Persephone (Proserpine), the daughter of Demeter (Δηώ), is meant; but it is not easy to discover appropriateness in the epithet "Thracian."

While thus on earth great Jove these pageants
play'd,
The winged boy did thrust into his throne,
And, scoffing, thus unto his mother said ;
"Lo ! now the heav'n's obey to me alone,
And take me for their Jove, while Jove to earth
is gone."

And thou, fair Phœbus, in thy colours bright
Wast there enwoven, and the sad distress
In which that boy thee plung'd, for despite
That thou betray'dst his mother's wantonness,
When she with Mars was meint¹ in joyfulness :
Forthy² he thrill'd thee with a leaden dart³
To love fair Daphne, ⁴ which thee lov'd less ;
Less she thee lov'd than was thy just desart,
Yet was thy love her death, and her death was
thy smart.

So lovedst thou the lusty Hyacinth ;
So lovedst thou the fair Coronis dear : ⁵
Yet both are of thy hapless hand extinct ;
Yet both in flow'rs do live, and love thee bear,
The one a paunce,⁶ the other a sweet-briar :
For grief whereof ye might have lively seen
The god himself rending his golden hair,
And breaking quite his garland ever green,
With other signs of sorrow and impatient teen.⁷

Both for those two, and for his own dear son,
The son of Clymené,⁸ he did repent ;
Who, bold to guide the chariot of the Sun,
Himself in thousand pieces fondly⁹ rent,
And all the world with flashing fier brent ; ¹⁰
So like, that all the walls did seem to flame.
Yet cruel Cupid, not herewith content,
Forc'd him eftsoons to follow other game,
And love a shepherd's daughter for his dearest
dame.

He lov'd Issa ¹¹ for his dearest dame,
And for her sake her cattle fed a while,
And for her sake a cowherd vile became :
The servant of Admetus, cowherd vile,
While that from heav'n he suffer'd exile.
Long were to tell each other lovely fit ; ¹²
Now, like a lion hunting after spoil ;
Now, like a hag ; now, like a falcon flit : ¹³
All which in that fair arras was most lively writ.

Next unto him was Neptune pictur'd,
In his divine resemblance wondrous like :
His face was rugged, and his hoary head

¹ Mingled. In *The Knight's Tale*, Chaucer puts into the mouth of Arcita a reference to the incident. See note 18, page 40.

² Therefore.
³ The golden darts of Cupid caused successful, the leaden unsuccessful love.

⁴ See note 12, page 37.

⁵ Hyacinthus, a beautiful Spartan youth, was beloved by Apollo and by Zephyrus ; but the latter was not favoured, and in a fit of jealousy, when Apollo and Hyacinthus were playing at quoits, he blew the god's quoit with fatal force against the youth's head. From his blood sprang the flower called by his name. Coronis was the mother of Æsculapius by Apollo, who killed her to revenge the transference of her love to the Arcadian Ischya. She is the "Wife of Phœbus," of whom, following Ovid (*Metam.*, ii. 531-632), Chaucer told the story in *The Manciple's Tale*.

⁶ Pansy.

⁷ Anguish.

⁸ Phaethon.

⁹ Foolishly.

¹⁰ Burned.

¹¹ A Lesbian maiden, daughter of Macareus, whom Apollo wooed in the form of a shepherd. Spenser has

Dropp'd with brackish dew ; his threefork'd
pike

He sternly shook, and therewith fierce did strike
The raging billows, that on ev'ry side
They trembling stood, and made a long broad
dyke,

That his swift chariot might have passage wide,
Which four great hippocames¹⁴ did draw, in
team-wise tied.

His sea-horses did seem to snort amain,
And from their nostrils blow the briny stream,
That made the sparkling waves to smoke again
And flame with gold ; but the white foamy
cream

Did shine with silver, and shoot forth his beam :
The god himself did pensive seem and sad,
And hung adown his head as he did dream ;
For privy love his breast empierc'd had,
Nor aught but dear Bisaltis¹⁵ ay could make
him glad.

He lov'd eke Iphimedia dear,
And Æolus' fair daughter, Arné hight,
For whom he turn'd himself into a steer,
And fed on fodder to beguile her sight.
Also, to win Deucalion's daughter bright,¹⁶
He turn'd himself into a dolphin fair ;
And like a winged horse he took his flight
To snaky-lock¹⁷ Medusa to repair,
On whom he got fair Pegasus that fitteth in
the air.

Next Saturn was (but who would ever ween
That sullen Saturn ever ween'd to love ?
Yet love is sullen, and Saturnlike seen,
As he did for Erigoné¹⁸ it prove),
That to a centaur did himself transmove.¹⁹
So prov'd it eke that gracious god of wine,
When, for to compass Philyra's hard love,
He turn'd himself into a fruitful vine,
And into her fair bosom made his grapes decline.

Long were to tell the amorous assays,
And gentle pangs, with which he mak'd meek
The mighty Mars to learn his wanton plays ;
How oft for Venus, and how often eke
For many other nymphs, he sore did shriek ;
With womanish tears, and with unwarlike
smarts,

Privily moistening his horrid cheek :

chosen to couple with Apollo's love for Issa his servitude to Admetus, king of Phœæ, which was due to a quite different cause—to the judgment that he should serve for a year, as a mortal, a mortal man, in expiation of his murder of the Cyclopes.

¹² Tale of love.

¹³ Fleet.

¹⁴ Sea-horses.

¹⁵ Theophane, daughter of Bisaltes ; Neptune transformed her to a ewe.

¹⁶ Protagenela was the daughter of Deucalion, but the mythology allots her to Zeus. In the passage quoted from Ovid, Melanthe, the daughter of Poseidon, is named as the lady whom her own father wooed in the guise of a dolphin.

¹⁷ An exact translation of "crinita colubris." See note 3, page 438.

¹⁸ There is a singular error in this stanza ; Erigone and Philyra are transposed ; it was the first whom the "gracious god of wine" won "falsâ uvâ ;" it was Philyra whom Saturn visited, in the form of a horse, and upon whom he begot the Centaur Chiron.

¹⁹ Transform.

There was he painted full of burning darts,
And many wide wounds lanc'd through his
inner parts.

Nor did he spare (so cruel was the elf)
His own dear mother (ah! why should he so!)
Nor did he spare sometimes to prick himself,
That he might taste the sweet consuming woe
Which he had wrought to many others mo'.
But to declare the mournful tragedies,
And spoils wherewith he all the ground did
strow,—

More eath¹ to number with how many eyes
High heav'n beholds sad lovers' nightly
thieveries.²

Kings, queens, lords, ladies, knights, and dam-
sels gent,³

Were heap'd together with the vulgar sort,
And mingled with the rascal rabblement,
Without respect of person or of port,⁴
To show Dan Cupid's pow'r and great effort:
And round about a border was entrail'd⁵
Of broken bows and arrows shiver'd short;
And a long bloody river through them rail'd⁶
So lively, and so like, that living sense it fail'd.⁷

And at the upper end of that fair room
There was an altar built of precious stone,
Of passing value and of great renown,⁸
On which there stood an image all alone
Of massy gold, which with his own light shone;
And wings it had with sundry colours dight,⁹
More sundry colours than the proud pavone¹⁰
Bears in his boasted fan, or Iris bright,
When her discolour'd¹¹ bow she spreads through
heaven bright.

Blindfold he was; and in his cruel fist
A mortal bow and arrows keen did hold,
With which he shot at random when him list;
Some headed with sad lead, some with pure gold;
(Ah! man, beware how thou those darts behold!)
A wounded dragon under him did lie,
Whose hideous tail his left foot did enfold,
And with a shaft was shot through either eye,
That no man forth might draw, nor no man
remedy.

And underneath his feet was written thus,
Unto the victor of the gods this be:
And all the people in that ample house
Did to that image bow their humble knee,
And oft committed foul idolatry.
That wondrous sight fair Britomart amaz'd,
Nor seeing could her wonder satisfy,
But ever more and more upon it gaz'd,
The while the passing brightness her frail senses
daz'd.

Then, as she backward cast her busy eye
To search each secret of that goodly stead,¹²
Over the door thus written she did spy,
Be bold: she oft and oft it over read,
Yet could not find what sense it figur'd:

¹ Easy. ² That is, it were easier to count the stars.
³ Noble. ⁴ Carriage, dignity.
⁵ Interwoven. ⁶ Flowed. ⁷ Deceived.
⁸ Written for "renown," for the sake of the rhyme;
French, "renommée"

But whatso were therein or writ or meant,
She was no whit thereby discourag'd
From prosecuting of her first intent,
But forward with bold steps into the next room
went.

Much fairer than the former was that room,
And richlier, by many parts, array'd;
For not with arras made in painful loom,
But with pure gold it all was overlaid,
Wrought with wild antics,¹³ which their follies
play'd

In the rich metal, as they living were:
A thousand monstrous forms therein were made,
Such as false Love doth oft upon him wear;
For Love in thousand monstrous forms doth oft
appear.

And, all about, the glist'ring walls were hung
With warlike spoils, and with victorious preys
Of mighty conquerors and captains strong,
Which were whilom captiv'd in their days
To cruel Love, and wrought their own decays:¹⁴
Their swords and spears were broke, and hau-
berks rent,

And their proud garlands of triumphant bays
Trodden in dust with fury insolent,
To show the victor's might and merciless intent.¹⁵

The warlike Maid marvelled much at the rich
array of the place, but more that no trace of
habitation or life appeared. Everywhere her
eye encountered the inscription, "Be bold;"
but at the upper end of the room was an iron
door, and on it written, "Be not too bold." Those
enigmatical counsels and cautions filled
her with great perplexity. She waited until
eventide without seeing any one; then, neither
doffing her armour nor resigning herself to
sleep, "she drew herself aside in sickness."¹⁶

CANTO XII.

*The Masque of Cupid, and the enchant-
ed chamber are display'd;
Whence Britomart redeems fair A-
moret, through charms decay'd.*

THEN, when as cheerless Night y-cover'd had
Fair heaven with a universal cloud,
That ev'ry wight, dismay'd with darkness sad,
In silence and in sleep themselves did sbroud,
She heard a shrilling trumpet sound aloud
Sign of nigh battle, or got victory:
Naught therewith daunted was her courage
proud,

But rather stirr'd to cruel enmity,
Expecting ever when some foe she might descry.
With that, a hideous storm of wind arose,
With dreadful thunder and lightning atwixt,

⁹ Set out, adorned.
¹⁰ Peacock. ¹¹ Variegated, parti-coloured.
¹² Place. ¹³ Fantastic devices.
¹⁴ Ruin. ¹⁵ Mind.
¹⁶ Into a position of safety.

And an earthquáke, as if it straight would loose
The world's foundations from his centre fixt :
A direful stench of smoke and sulphur mixt
Ensued, whose noyance¹ fill'd the fearful stead
From the fourth hour of night until the sixt ;
Yet the bold Britoness was naught y-dread,²
Though much enmov'd, but steadfast still per-
séveréd.

All suddenly a stormy whirlwind blew
Throughout the house, that clappèd ev'ry door ;
With which that iron wicket open flew,
As it with mighty levers had been tore ;
And forth issued, as on the ready floor
Of some théâtre, a grave personage
That in his hand a branch of laurel bore,
With comely 'haviour and count'nance sage,
Y-clad in costly garments fit for tragic stage.

Proceeding to the midst, he still did stand,
As if in mind he somewhat had to say ;
And to the vulgar³ beckoning with his hand,
In sign of silence, as to hear a play,
By lively actions he gan bewray⁴
Some argument of matter passionèd ;
Which done, he back retiréd soft away,
And, passing by, his name discoveréd,
Ease, on his robe in golden letters cipheréd.

The noble Maid, still standing, all this view'd,
And marvell'd at his strange intendiment :⁵
With that a joyous fellowship⁶ issued
Of minstrels making goodly merriment,
With wanton bards, and rhymers impudent ;
All which together sang full cheerfully
A lay of love's delight with sweet concent :⁷
After whom march'd a jolly company,
In manner of a masque, enrangéd orderly.

The while a most delicious harmony
In full strange notes was sweetly heard to sound,
That the rare sweetness of the melody
The feeble senses wholly did confound,
And the frail soul in deep delight nigh drown'd :
And, when it ceas'd, shrill trumpets loud did
bray,
That their report did far away rebound ;⁸
And, when they ceas'd, it gan again to play,
The while the masquers marchèd forth in trim
array.

The first was Fancy, like a lovely boy
Of rare aspect and beauty without peer,
Matchable either to that imp⁹ of Troy,
Whom Jove did love and chose his cup to bear ;
Or that same dainty lad, which was so dear
To great Alcides, that, when as he died,
He wailèd womanlike with many a tear,
And ev'ry wood and ev'ry valley wide
He fill'd with Hylas' name ; the nymphs eke
Hylas cried.

His garment neither was of silk nor say,¹⁰
But painted plumes in goodly order dight,

¹ Annoyance.

² Terrified.

³ Reveal, unfold.

⁴ Company.

⁵ Re-echo.

⁶ Fantastically fashioned or trimmed.

⁷ Many-coloured.

⁸ The crowd, the audience.

⁹ Meaning, design.

¹⁰ Harmony.

¹¹ Youth.

¹² Thin silk stuff.

Like as the sunburnt Indians do array
Their tawny bodies in their proudest plight :
As those same plumes, so seem'd he vain and
light,

That by his gait might easily appear ;
For still he far'd as dancing in delight,
And in his hand a windy fan did bear,
That in the idle air he mov'd still here and there.

And him beside march'd amorous Desire,
Who seem'd of riper years than th' other swain,
Yet was that other swain this elder's sire,
And gave him being, common to them twain :
His garment was disguiséd very vain,¹¹
And his embroider'd bonnet sat awry :
'Twixt both his hands few sparks he close did
strain,

Which still he blew and kindled busily,
That soon they life conceiv'd, and forth in
flames did fly.

Next after him went Doubt, who was y-clad
In a discolour'd¹² coat of strange disguise,
That at his back a broad cappuccio¹³ had,
And sleeves dependent Albanese-wise ;¹⁴
He look'd askew with his mistrustful eyes,
And nicely trod, as thorns lay in his way,
Or that the floor to shrink he did advise ;¹⁵
And on a broken reed he still did stay
His feeble steps, which shrank when hard
thereon he lay.

With him went Danger, cloth'd in ragged weed
Made of bear's skin, that him more dreadful
made ;

Yet his own face was dreadful, nor did need
Strange horror¹⁶ to deform his grisly shade :¹⁷
A net in th' one hand, and a rusty blade
In th' other was ; this Mischief, that Mishap ;
With th' one his foes he threaten'd to invade,
With th' other he his friends meant to enwrap :
For whom he could not kill he practis'd to en-
trap.

Next him was Fear, all arm'd from top to toe,
Yet thought himself not safe enough thereby,
But fear'd each shadow moving to or fro ;
And, his own arms when glitt'ring he did spy,
Or clashing heard, he fast away did fly,
As ashes pale of hue, and wingèd-heel'd ;
And evermore on Danger fix'd his eye,
'Gainst whom he always bent a brazen shield,
Which his right hand unarmèd fearfully did
wield.

With him went Hope in rank, a handsome maid,
Of cheerful look and lovely to behold ;
In silken samite¹⁸ she was light array'd,
And her fair locks were woven up in gold :
She always smil'd, and in her hand did hold
A holy-water-sprinkle, dipt in dew,
With which she sprinkled favours manifold
On whom she list, and did great liking shew ;
Great liking unto many, but true love to few.

¹³ Capuchin, or hood ; called after the Capuchin monks, from whose dress it was imitated.

¹⁴ Loose hanging sleeves in the Albanian fashion.

¹⁵ Perceive.

¹⁶ Any horror but its own, any foreign horror.

¹⁷ Appearance.

¹⁸ A light fine silk fabric.

And after them Dissemblance and Suspect¹
 March'd in one rank, yet an unequal pair ;
 For she was gentle and of mild aspect,
 Courteous to all and seeming debonair,²
 Goodly adorn'd and exceeding fair ;
 Yet was that all but painted and purloin'd,
 And her bright brows were deck'd with borrow'd
 hair ;
 Her deeds were forg'd, and her words false
 coin'd,
 And always in her hand two clews of silk she
 twin'd :

But he was foul, ill favour'd, and grim,
 Under his eyebrows looking still askance ;
 And ever, as Dissemblance laugh'd on him,
 He lour'd on her with dangerous³ eye-glance,
 Showing his nature in his countenance ;
 His rolling eyes did never rest in place,
 But walk'd each where for fear of hid mischance ;
 Holding a lattice still before his face,
 Through which he still did peep as forward he
 did pace.

Next him went Grief and Fury match'd y-fere ;⁴
 Grief all in sable sorrowfully clad,
 Down hanging his dull head with heavy cheer,
 Yet inly being more than seeming sad :
 A pair of pincers in his hand he had,
 With which he pinch'd people to the heart,
 That from thenceforth a wretched life they lad,⁵
 In wilful languor and consuming smart,
 Dying each day with inward wounds of dolour's
 dart.

But Fury was full ill apparell'd
 In rags, that naked nigh she did appear,
 With ghastly looks and dreadful drearihead ;⁶
 And from her back her garments she did tear,
 And from her head oft rent her snarl'd⁷ hair :
 In her right hand a firebrand she did toss
 About her head, still roaming here and there ;
 As a dismay'd deer in chase embost,⁸
 Forgetful of his safety, hath his right way lost.

After them went Displeasure and Pleasance,
 He looking lumpish and full sullen sad,
 And hanging down his heavy countenance ;
 She cheerful, fresh, and full of joyance glad,
 As if no sorrow she nor felt nor drad ;⁹
 That evil match'd pair they seem'd to be :
 An angry wasp th' one in a vial had,
 Th' other in hers an honey lady-bee.
 Thus march'd these six couples forth in fair
 degree.

After all these there march'd a most fair Dame,¹⁰
 Led of two greasy¹¹ villains, th' one Despite,
 The other clep'd¹² Cruelty by name :
 She doleful lady, like a dreary sprite
 Call'd by strong charms out of eternal night,
 Had Death's own image figur'd in her face,
 Full of sad signs, fearful to living sight ;

¹ Suspicion.² Suspicious.³ Led.⁷ Matted, tangled.⁹ Dreaded.² Gracious.⁴ Together.⁶ Dismal, terrible air.⁸ Hard pressed.

Yet in that horror show'd a seemly grace,
 And with her feeble feet did move a comely
 pace.

Her breast all naked, as net¹³ ivory
 Without adorn of gold or silver bright
 Wherewith the craftaman woult it beautify,
 Of her due honour was despoil'd quite ;
 And a wide wound therein (O rueful sight !)
 Entrench'd deep with knife accur'd keen,
 Yet freshly bleeding forth her fainting sprite,
 (The work of cruel hand) was to be seen,
 That dy'd in sanguine red her skin all snowy
 clean :

At that wide orifice her trembling heart
 Was drawn forth, and in silver basin laid,
 Quite through transfix'd with a deadly dart,
 And in her blood yet steaming fresh embay'd.¹⁴
 And those two villains (which her steps upstay'd,
 When her weak feet could scarcely her sustain,
 And fading vital powers gan to fade),
 Her forward still with torture did constrain,
 And evermore increas'd her consuming pain.

Next after her, the wing'd god himself
 Came riding on a lion ravenous,
 Taught to obey the menage¹⁵ of that Elf
 That man and beast with pow'r imperious
 Subdueth to his kingdom tyrannous :
 His blindfold eyes he bade a while unbind,
 That his proud spoil of that same dolorous
 Fair dame he might behold in perfect kind ;¹⁶
 Which seen, he much rejoic'd in his cruel
 mind.

Of which full proud, himself uprearing high,
 He look'd round about with stern disdain,
 And did survey his goodly company ;
 And, marshalling the evil-order'd train,
 With that the darts which his right hand did
 strain
 Full dreadfully he shook, that all did quake,
 And clapp'd on high his colour'd wings twain,
 That all his many¹⁷ it afraid did make :
 Then, blinding him again, his way he forth did
 take.

Behind him was Reproach, Repentance, Shame ;
 Reproach the first, Shame next, Repent behind :
 Repentance feeble, sorrowful, and lame ;
 Reproach spiteful, careless, and unkind ;
 Shame most ill-favour'd, bestial, and blind :
 Shame lour'd, Repentance sigh'd, Reproach did
 scold ;
 Reproach sharp stings, Repentance whips en-
 twin'd,
 Shame burning brand-irons in her hand did
 hold :
 All three to each unlike, yet all made in one
 mould.

And after them a rude confused rout
 Of persons flock'd, whose names is hard to read.¹⁸

¹⁰ Amoretta.¹¹ Squalid, gross¹³ Pure.¹⁵ Management.¹⁷ Company.¹² Called.¹⁴ Bathed.¹⁶ Manner.¹⁸ Declare.

Amongst them was stern Strife; and Anger
stout;

Unquiet Care; and fond Unthrifthead;¹
Lewd Loss of Time; and Sorrow seeming dead;
Inconstant Change; and false Disloyalty;
Consuming Riotise; and guilty Dread
Of heav'nly vengeance; faint Infirmitie;
Vile Poverty; and, lastly, Death with infamy.

There were full many more like maladies,
Whose names and natures I n'ot readen well;²
So many more, as there be fantasies
In wavering women's wit, that none can tell,
Or pains in love, or punishments in hell:
All which disguis'd march'd in masking wise
About the chamber by the damosel;
And then return'd, having march'd thrice,
Into the inner room from whence they first did
rise.

So soon as they had entered, the door was
closed, as it had been opened, by a blast of
wind; and Britomart, issuing from her post of
safety, vainly sought with force and with sleight
to open it. She therefore resolved to wait till
the masque appeared on the morrow; and when,
on the second evening, the brazen door flew
open, the Maiden entered fearlessly, "neither
of idle shows nor of false charms aghast." Cast-
ing her eyes around, she found none of all the
masquers; no living wight was there, save that
same woeful lady, whose hands were bound fast,
"and her small waist girt round with iron
bands unto a brazen pillar, by the which she
stands." Before her sat the vile enchanter,
"figuring strange characters of his art" in the
living blood "dreadfully dropping from her
dying heart," with the vain hope to charm her
into loving him. Seeing Britomart, he over-
threw his wicked books, and ran fiercely with a
murderous knife to kill the lady true; but the
Virgin Knight "his curs'd hand withheld, and
master'd his might." But now Busirane turned
his wicked weapon against the deliverer, and
"unwares it struck into her snowy chest,
that little drops empurpled her fair breast." Wrathfully drawing her mortal blade, Brito-
mart smote him to the ground half-dead; and
she would have slain him outright, if Amoretta
had not called on her to abstain, for he alone
could undo the charm that wrought her pain.
Britomart therefore spared his life, on condition
that he should restore the captive dame imme-
diately to her health and former state. The
enchanter submitted;

And, rising up, gan straight to overlook
Those curs'd leaves, his charms back to reverse:
Full dreadful things out of that baleful book
He read, and measur'd many a sad verse,
That horror gan the Virgin's heart to persee,³
And her fair locks upstar'd stiff on end,

¹ Foolish Unthrifthead.

² I cannot well tell.

³ Pierce.

⁴ In case.

⁵ Learn.

⁶ As if it had never been inflicted.

⁷ Mate; Scudamour.

⁸ But a little while before. ⁹ Assuaged, stopped.

¹⁰ When the first three books of "The Faerie Queen" were printed, in 1590, seven stanzas not given in sub-

Hearing him those same bloody lines rehearse;
And, all the while he read, she did extend
Hersword high over him, if⁴ aught he did offend.

Anon she gan perceive the house to quake,
And all the doors to rattle round about;
Yet all that did not her dismay'd make,
Nor slack her threatful hand for danger's doubt,
But still with steadfast eye and courage stout
Abode, to weet⁵ what end would come of all:
At last that mighty chain, which round about
Her tender waist was wound, adown gan fall,
And that great brazen pillar broke in pieces
small.

The cruel steel, which thrill'd her dying heart,
Fell softly forth, as of its own accord;
And the wide wound, which lately did dispart
Her bleeding breast, and riven bowels gor'd,
Was clos'd up, as it had not been sor'd;⁶
And ev'ry part to safety full sound,
As she were never hurt, was soon restor'd:
Then, when she felt herself to be unbound
And perfect whole, prostrate she fell unto the
ground

Before Britomart, with eloquent utterances of
praise and gratitude. Raising her up, the Maid
replied that to have delivered her was sufficient
reward, and bade her displace the memory of
her past pain by the thought that "her gentle
make⁷ had no less grief endur'd for her gentle
sake." Amoretta was much cheered by the
mention of her lover; and Britomart then
bound the enchanter with the same great chain
that lately fastened his fair captive to the pillar.

Returning back, those goodly rooms, which erst
She saw so rich and royally array'd,
Now vanish'd utterly and clean subvers'd
She found, and all their glory quite decay'd;
That sight of such a change her much dismay'd.
Thence forth descending to that perilous porch,
Those dreadful flames she also found delay'd⁸
And quenched quite like a consum'd torch,
That erst all ent'ers wont so cruelly to scorch.

More easy issue now than entrance late
She found; for now that feign'd-dreadful flame,
Which chok'd the porch of that enchanted gate,
And passage barr'd to all that thither came,
Was vanish'd quite, as it were not the same,
And gave her leave at pleasure forth to pass.
Th' enchanter's self, which all that fraud did
frame

To have effor'd the love of that fair lass,
Seeing his work now wasted, deep engriev'd was.

But, on arriving at the gate, they were aston-
ished and grieved to find no Scudamour; for
he had certainly believed that Britomart had
perished in the flames, and, with the sorrowing
Glaucé, he had ridden away in search of further
aid.¹⁰

sequent editions stood at the end of the third book,
narrating the happy reunion of Scudamour and Amoret,
and closing up their story in this wise:

"Thus do those lovers, with sweet countervail,
Each other of love's bitter fruit despoil.
But now my team begins to faint and fail,
All woxen weary of their journal toil;

THE FOURTH BOOK
OF
THE FAERIE QUEEN:
CONTAINING

THE LEGEND OF CAMBELL AND TRIAMOND, OR OF FRIENDSHIP.

THE rugged forehead,¹ that with grave foresight
Wields kingdoms' causes and affairs of state,
My looser rhymes, I wot, doth sharply wite,²
For praising love as I have done of late,
And magnifying lovers' dear debate;
By which frail youth is oft to folly led,
Through false allurement of that pleasing bait,
That better were in virtues discipl'd,³
Than with vain poems' weeds to have their
fancies fed.

Such ones ill judge of love, that cannot love,
Nor in their frozen hearts feel kindly flame:
Forthy⁴ they ought not thing unknown reprove,
Nor natural affection faultless blame
For fault of few that have abus'd the same:
For it of honour and all virtue is
The root, and brings forth glorious flow'rs of
fame,

That crown true lovers with immortal bliss,
The meed of them that love, and do not live amiss.

Which whoso list⁵ look back to former ages,
And call to count⁶ the things that then were
done,

Shall find that all the works of those wise sages,
And brave exploits which great heróes won,
In love were either ended or begun:
Witness the Father of Philosophy,⁷
Which to his Critias, shaded oft from sun,
Of love full many lessons did apply,
The which these Stoic censors cannot well deny.

To such therefore I do not sing at all;
But to that sacred Saint, my sov'reign Queen,
In whose chaste breast all bounty⁸ natural
And treasures of true love enlock'd be'n,⁹
'Bove all her sex that ever yet was seen;
To her I sing of love, that loveth best,
And best is lov'd of all alive, I ween;
To her this song most fitly is addrest,
The Queen of Love, and Prince of Peace from
heaven blest.

Which that she may the better deign to hear,
Do thou, dread Infant,¹⁰ Venus' darling dove,
From her high spirit chase imperious fear,¹¹

Therefore I will their sweaty yokes assail
At this same furrow's end, till a new day;
And ye, fair swains, after your long turmoil,
Now cease your work, and at your pleasure play;
Now cease your work; to-morrow is a holiday."

When, in 1596, Spenser reprinted the first three books with the first issue of the second three, he opened up again the story of Scudamour and Amoret, by substituting for the original seven closing stanzas the three in the text, and thus carrying forward into the new portion of his work the interest enlisted by the old.

¹ Spenser is understood to refer to Burleigh, whose "censure grave" he had sought to conciliate in an introductory sonnet (page 307), but who had not been softened by the poet's flattering deprecation, and had

And use of awful majesty remove:
Instead thereof with drops of melting love,
Dew'd with ambrosial kisses, by thee gotten
From thy sweet-smiling mother from above,
Sprinkle her heart, and haughty courage soften,
That she may hark to love, and read this lesson
often.

CANTO I.

*Fair Britomart saves Amoret:
Duess discord breeds
'Twixt Scudamour and Blandamour:
Their fight and warlike deeds.*

No more piteous story "of lovers' sad calamities of old" was ever told—so says the poet—"than that of Amoret's heart-binding chain, and this of Florimell's unworthy pain;" which he full often pities with tears, and wishes it had never been written. Amoret had "never joy'd day" since Scudamour won her from twenty knights in battle, and with her the Shield of Love. On their wedding-day, the enchanter Busirane brought in that masque of Love which Britomart had seen; and, while the guests were heedless with wine, he had carried the bride away, as if in sport, to the place of torment whence the Virgin Knight had released her, after seven months' captivity. Now, riding beside her deliverer, Amoret "right fearful was and faint lest she with blame her honour should attain;" for the "virgin wife" did not know the real sex of her companion; and her words trembled, her looks were coy and strange, "and ev'ry limb that touched her did quake." One evening the pair came to a castle at which a gay company was "assembled deeds of arms to see," and where it was the custom that whosoever had no love or leman present "should either win him one, or lie without the door." A jolly knight claimed Amoret for his love; but he was overthrown by Britomart—who, since he seemed valiant, cast in her mind how she might reconcile the admittance of the knight with the custom of the castle. She claimed Amoret as hers of right; then, as a lady, she claimed the knight for herself.

With that, her glist'ring helmet she unlaced;
Which doff'd, her golden locks, that were up-
bound
Still in a knot, unto her heels down traced,¹²

treated the first three books of "The Faerie Queen" with much severity of judgment. "The rugged forehead," is not to be taken as a personal description; in the sonnet to Sir Christopher Hatton, Spenser had spoken of "the rugged brow of careful Policy."

² Censure. ³ Disciplined. ⁴ Therefore.

⁵ Pleases (to).

⁶ To account, to memory.

⁷ Socrates. Here again the poet confounds Critias and Crito—both were disciples of Socrates, but the last was faithful to the teachings and the teacher to the end, while the first rendered himself odious by rapacity and cruelty in office. See note 13, page 386.

⁸ Goodness, virtue.

⁹ Are.

¹⁰ Cupid.

¹¹ The imperious mood inspiring fear.

¹² Went, flowed.

And like a silken veil in compass round
About her back and all her body wound :
Like as the shining sky in summer's night,
What time the days with scorching heat abound,
Is crested all with lines of fiery light,
That it prodigious seems in common people's
sight.

Such when those knights and ladies all about
Beheld her, all were with amazement smit,
And ev'ry one gan grow in secret doubt
Of this and that, according to each wit :
Some thought that some enchantment feign'd it ;
Some, that Bellona in that warlike wise
To them appear'd, with shield and armour fit ;
Some, that it was a masque of strange disguise :
So diversely each one did sundry doubts devise.

The young knight, now " doubly overcome,"
adored her ; and Amoret, freed from fear, laid
aside all her constraint. The pair spent all the
night discoursing of their loves, and in the
morning set out anew on their wanderings. At
last they spied two armed knights riding to-
wards them, each with a false but seeming-fair
lady by his side : one of the dames the false
Duessa in another of her many shapes ; the
other, no better than she, but more plainly
showing what she was.

Her name was Até, mother of debate¹
And all dissension which doth daily grow
Amongst frail men, that many a public state,
And many a private, oft doth overthrow.
Her false Duessa, who full well did know
To be most fit to trouble noble knights
Which hunt for honour, rais'd from below,
Out of the dwellings of the damn'd sprites,
Where she in darkness wastes her curs'd days
and nights.

Hard by the gates of hell her dwelling is ;
There, where as all the plagues and harms
abound
Which punish wicked men that walk amiss :
It is a darksome delve² far under ground,
With thorns and barren brakes³ environ'd round,
That none the same may easily out win ;⁴
Yet many ways to enter may be found,
But none to issue forth when one is in :
For discord harder is to end than to begin.

And all within the riven walls were hung
With ragged monuments of times forepast,⁵
All which the sad effects of discord sung :
There were rent robes and broken sceptres
plac'd ;
Altars defil'd, and holy things defac'd ;

¹ Strife Até was the divinity, among the ancient Greeks, who led men and gods into rash and heedless acts. In the second book of "The Faerie Queen," the same part is played by a masculine personage, named "Atin." See note 4, page 377.

² Cave, hollow.

³ Brackens.

⁴ Find out.

⁵ Gone past.

⁶ Representation.

⁷ The goddess of Discord, Eris, enraged that she was not invited to the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, threw among the gods a golden apple, inscribed "to the fairest." When Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite, each claiming the apple, appeared to submit their charms to the judgment of Paris, the goddess of Love won the apple by promising the judge for his wife the fairest

Disshiver'd spears, and shields y-torn in twain ;
Great cities ransack'd, and strong castles ras'd ;
Nations captiv'd, and huge armies slain :
Of all which ruins there some relics did remain.

There was the sign⁶ of antique Babylon ;
Of fatal Thebes ; of Rome that reign'd long ;
Of sacred Salem ; and sad Ilion,
For memory of which on high there hung
The Golden Apple, cause of all their wrong,
For which the three fair goddesses did strive :⁷
There also was the name of Nimrod strong ;
Of Alexander, and his princes five⁸
Which shar'd to them the spoils that he had got
alive :

And there the relics of the drunken fray,
The which amongst the Lapithæ befell ;
And of the bloody feast, which sent away
So many Centaurs' drunken souls to hell,
That under great Alcides' fury fell :⁹
And of the dreadful discord, which did drive
The noble Argonauts to outrage fell,
That each of life sought others to deprive,
All mindless of the Golden Fleece, which made
them strive.

And eke of private persons many mo',
That were too long a work to count them all ;
Some, of sworn friends that did their faith
forego ;
Some, of born brethren prov'd unnatural ;
Some, of dear lovers foes perpetual :
Witness their broken bands there to be seen,
Their garlands rent, their bow'rs despoil'd all ;
The monuments whereof there biding be'n,¹⁰
As plain as at the first when they were fresh
and green.

Such was her house within ; but all without
The barren ground was full of wicked weeds,
Which she herself had sown all about,
Now grown great, at first of little seeds,
The seeds of evil words and factious deeds ;
Which, when to ripeness due they grown are,
Bring forth an infinite increase, that breeds
Tumultuous trouble, and contentious jar,
The which most often end in bloodshed and in
war.

And those same curs'd seeds do also serve
To her for bread, and yield her living food :
For life it is to her, when others sterve¹¹
Through mischievous debate¹ and deadly feul,
That she may suck their life and drink their
blood,
With which she from her childhood had been fed :
For she at first was born of hellish brood,

woman on earth—Helen, whose abduction led to the war of Troy.

⁶ Alexander's empire was divided among four of his generals—Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus Nicator, and Ptolemy Lagus—after the attempt of a fifth, Antigonus, to reign over the whole, had been frustrated.

⁹ The war of the Lapithæ and the Centaurs being terminated by a peace, the Centaurs were invited to the marriage-feast of Pirithous, king of the Lapithæ, and Hippodamia. The guests attempted to carry off the bride and the other women ; and a bloody fight ensued, in which the Centaurs were defeated.

¹⁰ Are remaining.

¹¹ Perish, die.

And by infernal Furies nourish'd ;
That by her monstrous shape might easily be
read.¹

Her face most foul and filthy was to see,
With squinted eyes contr'ary ways intended,²
And loathly mouth, unmeet a mouth to be,
That naught but gall and venom comprehended,
And wicked words that God and man offended :
Her lying tongue was in two parts divided,
And both the parts did speak, and both con-
tended ;

And as her tongue so was her heart discided,³
That never thought one thing, but doubly still
was guided.

Als'⁴ as she double spake, so heard she double,
With matchless⁵ ears deform'd and distort',
Fill'd with false rumours and seditious trouble
Bred in assemblies of the vulgar sort,
That still are led with ev'ry light report :
And as her ears, so eke her feet were odd,
And much unlike ; th' one long, the other short,
And both misplac'd ; that, when th' one forward
yode,⁶

The other back retir'd and contr'ary trod.

Likewise unequal were her hand's twain ;
That one did reach, the other push'd away ;
That one did make, the other marr'd again,
And sought to bring all things unto decay ;
Whereby great riches gather'd many a day
She in short space did often bring to naught,
And their possessors often did dismay :⁷
For all her study was, and all her thought,
How she might overthrow the things that
Concord wrought.

So much her malice did her might surpass,
That even th' Almighty's self she did malign,
Because to man so merciful he was,
And unto all his creatures so benign,
Since she herself was of his grace indign :⁸
For all this world's fair workmanship she tried
Unto its last confusion to bring,
And that great golden chain quite to divide,
With which it blessed Concord hath together
tied.

Such was that hag, who, serving as Duessa's
bawd, aided her in the malicious work of hurt-
ing good knights ; for which end Duessa had
assumed an aspect "as fresh and fragrant as
the flower-de-luce." Her mate was the fickle-
minded and inconstant Blandamour ; and with
him rode the false Sir Paridell. Seeing Brito-
mart approach with Amoret, Blandamour in-
cited Paridell to win the lady for his own ; but
Paridell, remembering his overthrow by Brito-
mart before the castle of Malbecco, declined the
encounter ; whereupon Blandamour resigned to
his companion his own lady, and pricked against
the warlike Britoness, to challenge Amoret for
his fee. But the Maid pitched her assailant
out of his saddle, and rode disdainfully on,
leaving him consumed with wondrous grief of
mind and shame. Disassembling his vexation,

he continued the journey with the rest of his
company, and soon espied two knights approach-
ing with speed. Blandamour was now more
distressed than ever, discerning that one of the
pair was Scudamour, "whom mortally he hated
evermore ;" and he besought Sir Paridell to
repay him for his recent good turn, "and justify
his cause on yonder knight"—since, through his
wounds in the encounter with Britomart, he
could not combat himself. Paridell consented ;
"myself will for you fight as you have done
for me ; the left hand rubs the right." Paridell
then rushed against Scudamour ; and both were
unhorsed in the shock.

As when two billows in the Irish Sounds,
Forcibly driven with contr'ary tides,
Do meet together, each aback rebounds
With roaring rage ; and dashing on all sides,
That filleth all the sea with foam, divides
The doubtful current into diverse ways :
So fell those two in spite of both their prides ;
But Scudamour himself did soon upraise,
And, mounting light, his foe for lying long
upbrays.⁹

Paridell, however, all "rolled on a heap," lay
still in swoon, till his companions ran to him,
undid his helmet and mail, and at last restored
him to consciousness. Blandamour meantime
reviled Sir Scudamour for overthrowing "by
sleight and foul advantage" a knight so much
better than himself ; and lamented that he was
not himself in a condition to avenge the wrong
done to his friend. Scudamour "little an-
swered," though his mighty indignation plainly
beclouded his face. The crafty Duessa now
interposed, asking why they should strive so
sore for ladies' love, and bidding Scudamour
not be wroth that his lady "list love another
knight ; nor do yourself dislike a whit the
more ; for love is free, and led with self-
delight, nor will enforced be with mastery of
might." "Vile Até" reiterated in even broader
terms the accusation of "false Duessa" against
the honour of Amoret ; and, conjured to tell
what she had seen, she answered that she had
seen a stranger knight, whose name she knew
not, but in his shield he bore the heads of many
broken spears :

"I saw him have your Amoret at will ;
I saw him kiss ; I saw him her embrace ;
I saw him sleep with her all night his fill ;
All, many nights ; and many by in place
That present were to testify the case."
Which when as Scudamour did hear, his heart
Was thrill'd with inward grief : as when in chase
The Parthian strikes a stag with shiv'ring dart,
The beast astonish'd stands in midst of his
smart ;

So stood Sir Scudamour when this he heard,
Nor word he had to speak for great dismay,
But look'd on Glaucé grim, who wax afear'd
Of outrage for the words which she heard say,

¹ Discerned.² Directed.³ Cleft asunder.⁴ Also.⁵ Unmatched, dissimilar.⁶ Went.⁸ Unworthy.⁷ Overthrow, destroy.⁹ Upbraids.

Although untrue she wist them by assay.¹
But Blandamour, when as he did espy
His change of cheer, that anguish did bewray,
He wox full blithe, as he had got² thereby,
And gan thereat to triumph without victory.

He taunted Scudamour on "the fruitless end
of his vain boast, and spoil of love misgotten,"
assuring him that "all things not rooted well
will soon be rotten;" while false Duessa chimed
in with opprobrious and jeering words. Scuda-
mour, for passing great despite, with difficulty
restrained himself from slaying guiltless Glauce;
and he bitterly exclaimed against "discourteous,
disloyal Britomart, untrue to God, and unto
man unjust," who had "defiled the pledge com-
mitted to her trust"—for Scudamour is still
unaware that Britomart is a maiden. Thrice,
in his flaming fury, did the Knight raise his
hand to kill the aged squire "whose lord had
done his love this foul despite;" "and thrice
he drew it back; so did at last forbear."

CANTO II.

*Blandamour wins false³ Florimell;
Paridell for her strives:
They are accorded:⁴ Agapt
Doth lengthen her sons' lives.*

FIREBRAND of hell, first tin'd⁵ in Phlegethon
By thousand Furies, and from thence out thrown
Into this world, to work confusion,
And set it all on fire by force unknown,
Is wicked Discord; whose small sparks, once
blown,
None but a god or godlike man can slake:
Such as was Orpheus, that, when strife was grown
Amongst those famous imps of Greece,⁶ did take
His silver harp in hand, and shortly friends
them make:

Or such as that celestial Psalmist was,
That, when the wicked fiend his lord⁷ tormented,
With heav'nly notes, that did all other pass,
The outrage of his furious fit relented.⁸
Such music is wise words, with time concerted,⁹
To moderate stiff minds dispos'd to strive:
Such as that prudent Roman¹⁰ well invented;
What time his people into parts did rive,¹¹
Them reconcil'd again, and to their homes did
drive.

Such wise words did Glauce use to calm the
furious Sir Scudamour; while Blandamour and
Paridell set her at naught. As they rode thus,
they met the feigned or "snowy" Florimell,
with the knight who had carried her off from
Braggadocio, and who was called, as we now
learn, "Sir Ferraguh." Blandamour, stung with

desire to have the lovely lady—for his fancy
light "was always flitting as the wav'ring wind
after each beauty that appear'd in sight"—in-
cited the dumpish Paridell to fight for her; but
Paridell made "fair denial," and Blandamour
spurred hotly against Ferraguh, whom with the
sudden onset he unhorsed, and whose dame he
vauntingly bore away. The snowy lady made
semblance of love to her new lord, till "he
seem'd brought to bed in paradise," so tho-
roughly did her deceits win his soul away. But
Paridell envied him, "as seeming plac'd in sole
felicity;" and Até, finding now fit opportunity
to stir up strife, "did privily put coals into his
secret fire." At last, Paridell reminds Blanda-
mour of their covenant that every spoil or prey
should be shared equally between them, and de-
mands his part in the "lady bright." Blanda-
mour answers with angry and taunting words;
and the knights, forgetting all their friendship,
ride against and unhorse each other.

As when two warlike brigantines at sea,
With murderous weapons arm'd to cruel fight,
Do meet together on the watery lea,¹²
They stem¹³ each other with so fell despite,
That with the shock of their own heedless might
Their wooden ribs are shaken nigh asunder;
They which from shore behold the dreadful sight
Of flashing fire, and hear the ordnance thunder,
Do greatly stand amaz'd at such unwonted won-
der.

But soon both start up in amaze, and fly at
each other "like two mad mastiffs;" while their
ladies, far from interposing, goad them on to
fight with many provocative words. The poet
thinks that they might be fighting yet, if the
Squire of Dames had not come that way, and,
first laying "on those ladies thousand blames"
for fomenting the strife, humbly besought the
knights to stay their hands. On their reluctant
compliance, he inquires the cause of strife; and,
being told that it is for the love of Florimell,
he expresses his wonder how that could be,
"and she so far astray, as none could tell." But
Paridell angrily points out to him the
lady there present; and the Squire, convinced
that he beholds the true Florimell, instantly
makes his obeisances—"for none alive but joy'd
in Florimell." He then seeks to persuade the
knights to join in friendship for her sake; and,
to strengthen his counsel, tells them how Sir
Satyrane had found the golden girdle of Flori-
mell, "which for her sake he wore, as him
beseem'd well."

"But when as she herself was lost and gone,
Full many knights, that lov'd her like¹⁴ dear,
Thereat did greatly grudge, that he alone
That lost fair lady's ornament should wear,
And gan therefor close¹⁵ spite to him to bear;

¹ Experience.² As if he had gained.³ The feigned.⁴ Reconciled.⁵ Kindled.⁶ Youths or children of Greece; the Argonauts, whom Orpheus accompanied on their expedition to fetch the golden fleece.⁷ Saul. See 1 Samuel, chap. xvi.⁸ Softened, assuaged.⁹ Harmonised.¹⁰ Menenius Agrippa; who, when the Roman popu-
lace withdrew to the Mons Sacer, persuaded them to
return by the well-known fable of the Belly and the
Members, reproduced by Shakespeare in "Coriolanus,"
act i. scene i.¹¹ Divide.¹² Plain.¹³ Strike against.¹⁴ Equally.¹⁵ Secret.

Which he to shun, and stop vile envy's sting,
Hath lately caus'd to be proclaim'd each where
A solemn feast, with public tourneying,
To which all knights with them their ladies are
to bring:

"And of them all she that is fairest found
Shall have that golden girdle for reward;
And of those knights, who is most stout on
ground,
Shall to that fairest lady be prefer'd.¹
Since therefore she herself is now your ward,
To you that ornament of hers pertains,
Against all those that challenge it, to guard,
And save her honour with your venturous pains;
That shall you win more glory, than ye here
find gains."

Hearing "the reason of his words," they
abate their malice, swear new friendship, and
ride forth together "in friendly sort, that lasted
but a while; and of all old dislikes they made
fair weather; yet all was forg'd and spread
with golden foil, that under it hid hate and
hollow guile." Thus marching all "in close
disguise of feign'd love," they overtake two
knights in close friendly conference, followed
by "two ladies of most goodly hue," who, in
courteous discourse with each other, are "un-
mindful both of that discordful crew." The
overtaking company send forward the Squire of
Dames to reconnoitre; and he returns with the
news that they are two of the bravest knights
in Faery Land, and those two ladies their two
lovers dear; "Courageous Cambell, and stout
Triamond, with Canacé and Cambine link'd
in lovely bond."

Whilom, as antique stories tellen us,
Those two were foes the felonest² on ground,
And battle made the dreadest dangerous
That ever shrilling trumpet did resound;
Though now their acts be nowhere to be found,
As that renown'd poet them compil'd
With warlike numbers and heroic sound,
Dan Chaucer, Well of English undefil'd,
On Fame's eternal beadroll worthy to be fil'd.
But wicked Time, that all good thoughts doth
waste,

And works of noblest wits to naught outwear,
That famous monument hath quite defac'd,
And robb'd the world of treasure endless dear,
The which might have enrich'd all us here.
O cursed eld,³ the canker-worm of writs!⁴
How may these rhymes, so rude as doth appear,
Hope to endure, since works of heav'nly wits
Are quite devour'd, and brought to naught by
little bits!

Then pardon, O most sacred happy spirit,
That I thy labours lost may thus revive,
And steal from thee the meed of thy due merit,
That none durst ever whilst thou wast alive,
And, being dead, in vain yet many strive:

¹ Preferred; she shall be bestowed upon him.

² Fellest, cruellest.

³ Age.

⁴ Writings, manuscripts.

⁵ See note 18, page 121, on The Squire's Tale; which

Nor dare I like; but, through infusion sweet
Of thine own spirit which doth in me survive,
I follow here the footing of thy feet,
That with thy meaning so I may the rather
meet.⁵

Cambello's sister was fair Canacé,
That was the learned'st lady in her days,
Well seen⁶ in ev'ry science that might be,
And ev'ry secret work of nature's ways;
In witty riddles; and in wise soothsays;
In pow'r of herbs; and tunes of beasts and birds;
And, that augmented all her other praise,
She modest was in all her deeds and words,
And wondrous chaste of life, yet lov'd of knights
and lords.

Full many lords and many knights her lov'd,
Yet she to none of them her liking lent,
Nor ever was with fond affection mov'd,
But rul'd her thoughts with goodly government,
For dread of blame and honour's blemishment;
And eke unto her looks a law she made,
That none of them once out of order went,
But, like to wary sentinels well stay'd,
Still watch'd on ev'ry side, of secret foes afraid.
So much the more as she refus'd to love,
So much the more she lov'd was and sought,
That oftentimes unquiet strife did move
Amongst her lovers, and great quarrels wrought;
That oft for her in bloody arms they fought.
Which when as Cambell, that was stout and wise,
Perceiv'd would breed great mischief, he be-
thought

How to prevent the peril that might rise,
And turn both him and her to honour in this
wise.

One day, when all that troop of warlike wooers
Assembled were, to weet⁷ whose she should be,
All mighty men and dreadful derring-doers⁸
(The harder it to make them well agree),
Amongst them all this end he did decree;
That, of them all which love to her did make,
They by consent should choose the stoutest
three,

That with himself should combat for her sake,
And of them all the victor should his sister take.
Bold was the challenge, as himself was bold,
And courage full of haughty hardiment,⁹
Approved oft in perils manifold,
Which he achiev'd to his great ornament:
But yet his sister's skill unto him lent
Most confidence and hope of happy speed,
Conceiv'd by a ring which she him sent,
That, 'mongst the many virtues which we read,
Had power to staunch all wounds that mortally
did bleed.

Well was that ring's great virtue known to all;
That dread thereof, and his redoubted might,
Did all that youthly rout so much appal,
That none of them durst undertake the fight:
More wise they ween'd to make of love delight,

Chaucer left unfinished, and Spenser ventures to con-
tinue.

⁶ Skilled.

⁷ Learn.

⁸ Doers of daring deeds.

⁹ Hardihood, bravery.

Than life to hazard for fair lady's look :
And yet uncertain by such outward sight,
Though for her sake they all that peril took,
Whether she would them love, or in her liking
brook.¹

Amongst those knights there were three brethren
bold,

Three bolder brethren never were y-born,
Born of one mother in one happy mould,
Born at one burden in one happy morn ;
Thrice happy mother, and thrice happy morn,
That bore three such, three such not to be
found !

Her name was Agapé, whose children wer'n²
All three as one ; the first hight Priamond,
The second Diamond, the youngest Triamond.

Stout Priamond, but not so strong to strike ;
Strong Diamond, but not so stout a knight ;
But Triamond was stout and strong alike :
On horseback us'd Triamond to fight,
And Priamond on foot had more delight ;
But horse and foot knew Diamond to wield :
With curtaxe³ us'd Diamond to smite,
And Triamond to handle spear and shield,
But spear and curtaxe both us'd Priamond in
field.

These three did love each other dearly well,
And with so firm affection were allied,
As if but one soul in them all did dwell,
Which did her pow'r into three parts divide ;
Like three fair branches budding far and wide,
That from one root deriv'd their vital sap :
And like that root, that doth her life divide,
Their mother was ; and had full blessed hap
These three so noble babes to bring forth at one
clap.⁴

Their mother was a Fay, and had the skill
Of secret things, and all the pow'rs of Nature,
Which she by art could use unto her will,
And to her service bind each living creature,
Through secret understanding of their feature.⁵
Thereto she was right fair, whenso her face
She list⁶ discover, and of goodly stature ;
But she, as Fays are wont, in privy place
Did spend her days, and lov'd in forests wild to
space.⁷

There on a day a noble youthly knight,
Seeking adventures in the salvage wood,
Did by great fortune get of her the sight,
As she sat careless by a crystal flood
Combing her golden locks, as seem'd her good ;
And unawares upon her laying hold,
That strove in vain him long to have withstood,
Oppress'd⁸ her, and there (as it is told)
Got these three lovely babes, that prov'd three
champions bold :

Which she with her long foster'd in that wood,
Till that to ripeness of man's state they grew :
Then, showing forth signs of their father's blood,

They lov'd arms, and knighthood did ensue,⁹
Seeking adventures where they any knew.
Which when their mother saw, she gan to doubt
Their safety ; lest by searching dangers new,
And rash provoking perils all about,
Their days might be abridg'd through their
courage stout.

Therefore desirous th' end of all their days
To know, and them t' enlarge with long extent,
By wondrous skill and many hidden ways
To the Three Fatal Sisters'¹⁰ house she went.
Far under ground from track of living went,
Down in the bottom of the deep Abyss,
Where Demogorgon¹¹ in dull darkness pent,
Far from the view of gods and heaven's bliss,
The hideous Chaos keeps, their dreadful dwell-
ing is.

There she them found all sitting round about
The direful distaff standing in the mid,¹²
And with unwearied fingers drawing out
The lines of life, from living knowledge hid.
Sad Clotho held the rock,¹³ the while the thread
By grisly Lachesis was spun with pain,
That cruel Atropos eftsoons undid,
With curs'd knife cutting the twist in twain :
Most wretched men, whose days depend on
threads so vain !

She, them saluting there, by them sat still,
Beholding how the threads of life they span :
And when at last she had beheld her fill,
Trembling in heart, and looking pale and wan,
Her cause of coming she to tell began.
To whom fierce Atropos ; " Bold Fay, that durst
Come see the secret of the life of man,
Well worthy thou to be of Jove accurst,
And eke thy children's threads to be asunder
burst ! " ¹⁴

Whereat she sore afraid, yet her besought
To grant her boon, and rigour to abate,
That she might see her children's threads forth
brought,
And know the measure of their utmost date
To them ordain'd by eternal fate :
Which Clotho granting, show'd her the same ;
That when she saw, it did her much amate¹⁵
To see their threads so thin, as spiders frame,
And eke so short, that seem'd their ends out
shortly came.

She then began them humbly to entreat
To draw them longer out, and better twine,
That so their lives might be prolong'd late :
But Lachesis thereat gan to repine,
And said ; " Fond¹⁶ Dame ! that deem'st of things
divine

As of humane, that they may alter'd be,
And chang'd at pleasure for those imps¹⁷ of thine :
Not so ; for what the Fates do once decree,
Not all the gods can change, nor Jove himself
can free ! "

¹ Endure.

² Also called "cuttle-axe"—a cutlass.

³ At one blow—at one time.

⁴ Pleased (to).

⁵ Ravished.

⁶ Were.

⁷ Character.

⁸ Roam.

⁹ Pursue.

¹⁰ The Three Fates.

¹¹ See note 3, page 314.

¹² In the centre.

¹³ Broken.

¹⁴ Foolish.

¹⁵ Distaff.

¹⁶ Overcome, distress.

¹⁷ Children.

"Then since," quoth she, "the term of each man's life

For naught may lessen'd nor enlarg'd be,
Grant this, that when ye ahred with fatal knife
His line, which is the eldest of the three,
Which is of them the shortest, as I see,
Eftsoons his life may pass into the next;
And, when the next shall likewise ended be,
That both their lives may likewise be annex
Unto the third, that his may be so trebly wext."¹

They granted it; and then that careful Fay
Departed thence with full contented mind;
And, coming home, in warlike fresh array
Them found all three, according to their kind;²
But unto them what destiny was assign'd,
Or how their lives were ek'd,³ she did not tell;
But evermore, when she fit time could find,
She warn'd them to tend their safeties well,
And love each other dear, whatever them befell.

So did they surely during all their days,
And never discord did amongst them fall;
Which much augmented all their other praise:
And now, t' increase affection natural,
In love of Canacé they join'd all:
Upon which ground this same great battle grew
(Great matter growing of beginning small),
The which, for length, I will not here pursue,
But rather will reserve it for a canto new.

CANTO III.

*The battle 'twixt three brethren with
Cambell for Canacé:
Cambina with true friendship's bond
Doth their long strife agree.*

O! WHY do wretched men so much desire
To draw their days unto the utmost date,
And do not rather wish them soon expire;
Knowing the misery of their estate,
And thousand perils which them still await,
Toasing them like a boat amid the main,
That ev'ry hour they knock at Death's gate!
And he that happy seems, and least in pain,
Yet is as nigh his end as he that most doth plain.⁴

Therefore the poet holds this Fay but foolish
and vain, who, in seeking long life for her three
children, did but "more prolong their pain."
Yet while they lived they were happy, ennobled
for their courtesy, and renowned for their chi-
valry. They took in hand the hardy challenge,
"for Canacé with Cambell for to fight;" and on
the day fixed they appeared in the lists, where
six judges sat at one side, while at the other
Canacé was placed on a stately stage. All the
due ceremonial performed, Priamond came for-
ward first of the three to fight; but after a
cruel conflict, in which Cambell was severely

wounded, though the magic power of the ring
prevented his losing any blood, Priamond was
slain by his own spearhead, fiercely thrown back
at him by his antagonist, and cleaving his
"weasand-pipe."

His weary ghost, assoil'd⁵ from fleshly band,
Did not, as others wont, directly fly
Unto her rest in Pluto's grialy land;
Nor into air did vanish presently;
Nor chang'd was into a star in sky;
But through traduction⁶ was eftsoons deriv'd,⁷
Like as his mother pray'd the Destiny,
Into his other brethren that surviv'd,
In whom he liv'd anew, of former life depriv'd.

Diamond, the next brother, "stirr'd to ven-
geance and despite through secret feeling of
his⁸ generous sprite," now engaged Cambell in
combat.

As when two tigers, prick'd with hunger's rage,
Have by good fortune found some beast's fresh
spoil,

On which they ween⁹ their famine to assuage,
And gain a feastful guardon¹⁰ of their toil;
Both falling out do stir up strife and broil,
And cruel battle 'twixt themselves do make,
While neither lets the other touch the soil,¹¹
But either 'adains¹² with other to partake:
So cruelly those knights strove for that lady's
sake.

Many strokes were interchanged and warded;
till, growing impatient, Diamond concentrated
his whole force in one mighty swing of his
murderous axe. But Cambell nimbly swerved
aside, and Diamond, missing his mark, slipped
his right foot and almost fell.

As when a vulture, greedy of his prey,
Through hunger long, that heart¹³ to him doth
lend,

Strikes at a heron with all his body's sway,
That from his force seems naught may it defend;
The wary fowl, that spies him toward bend
His dreadful scouse,¹⁴ avoids it, shunning light,
And maketh him his wing in vain to spend;
That, with the weight of his own wieldless¹⁵
might,

He falleth nigh to ground, and scarce recovereth
flight.

Seizing the fair chance, Cambell, ere his foe
could recover himself, struck off his head; but
the headless trunk stood still a while, much to
the amazement of the spectators, who did not
know the Fates' decree "for life's succession in
the brethren three." Two souls possessed the
body of Diamond; and though one was reft, the
other would have remained, if the body had not
been dismembered—"but, finding no fit seat,
the lifeless corse it left."

It left; but that same soul which therein dwelt,
Straight ent'ring into Triamond, him fill'd

¹ Waxed, increased.

² Augmented.

³ Absolved, set free.

⁷ Communicated.

⁹ Think.

⁸ Nature.

⁴ Complain.

⁶ Transfer.

⁸ Priamond's.

¹⁰ Reward.

¹¹ The prey, all soiled with the mud and dust of the chase.

¹³ Courage.

¹⁵ Ungovernable.

¹² Disdains.

¹⁴ Swoop. See note 24, page 234.

With double life and grief; which when he felt,
As one whose inner parts had been y-thrill'd¹
With point of steel that close² his heart-blood
spill'd,

He lightly leap'd out of his place of rest,
And, rushing forth into the empty field,
Against Cambello fiercely him addrest;
Who, him affronting³ soon, to fight was ready
prest.⁴

Well might ye wonder how that noble knight,
After he had so often wounded been,
Could stand on foot now to renew the fight:
But had ye then him forth advancing seen,
Some newborn wight ye would him surely ween;
So fresh he seem'd, and so fierce in sight;
Like as a snake, whom weary winter's teen⁵
Hath worn to naught, now, feeling summer's
might,
Casts off his ragged skin and freshly doth him
dight.⁶

All was through virtue of the ring he wore;
The which not only did not from him let
One drop of blood to fall, but did restore
His weaken'd pow'rs, and dull'd spirits whet,
Through working of the stone therein y-set.
Else how could one of equal might with most,⁷
Against so many no less mighty met,
Once think to match three such on equal cost,⁸
Three such as able were to match a puissant
host?

Triamond, nevertheless, fearless and hopeful
of victory, fiercely assailed Cambell with blows
"as thick as hail forth pour'd from the sky,"
so that Cambell found it prudent to yield
ground, till his foe had spent his breath; then
he forced Triamond to retreat in turn.

Like as the tide, that comes from th' ocean main,
Flows up the Shannon with contráry force,
And, overruling him in his own reign,
Drives back the current of his kindly⁹ course,
And makes it seem to have some other source;
But when the flood is spent, then, back again
His borrow'd waters forc'd to redisburse,
He sends the sea his own with double gain,
And tribute eke withal, as to his sovereign.

"Thus did the battle vary to and fro," till at
last Triamond waxed faint and feeble through
loss of blood.

But Cambell still more strong and greater grew,
Nor felt his blood to waste, nor pow'rs em-
perish'd,¹⁰

Through that ring's virtue, that with vigour new,
Still when as he enfeebled was, him cherish'd,
And all his wounds and all his bruises guerish'd:¹¹
Like as a wither'd tree, through husband's¹² toil,
Is often seen full freshly to have flourish'd,
And fruitful apples to have borne a while,
As fresh as when it first was planted in the soil.

Through which advantage, in his strength he rose
And smote the other with so wondrous might,
That, through the seam which did his hauberk
close,

Into his throat and life it pierc'd quite,
That down he fell as dead in all men's sight:
Yet dead he was not; yet he sure did die,
As all men do that lose the living sprite:
So did one soul out of his body fly
Unto her native home from mortal misery.

But nathäless, whilst all the lookers-on
Him dead behight,¹³ as he to all appear'd,
All unawares he started up anon,
As one that had out of a dream been rear'd,
And fresh assail'd his foe; who, half afear'd
Of th' uncouth sight, as he some ghost had seen,
Stood still amaz'd, holding his idle sward;¹⁴
Till, having often by him stricken been,
He forc'd was to strike and save himself from
teen.¹⁵

Cambell now fought more warily, "as one in
fear the Stygian gods t' offend;" and Triamond,
thinking that his opponent's strength began to
fail, heaved on high his mighty hand, to end
him with one blow. Cambell anticipated the
stroke by a thrust which pierced through both
Triamond's sides. But the blow of Triamond in
the same moment descended on Cambell's head;
so that both, seeming dead, fell to the ground
together. All believed that the battle was at
an end; the judges rose; the lists were broken
up; and Canacé began to wail her dearest friend.
But, suddenly, the combatants started up anew,
and continued to fight as before.

Whilst thus the case in doubtful balance hung,
Unsure to whether side it would incline,
And all men's eyes and hearts, which there
among

Stood gazing, fill'd were with rueful tine,¹⁶
And secret fear to see their fatal fine;¹⁷
All suddenly they heard a troublous noise,
That seem'd some perilous tumult to design,¹⁸
Confus'd with women's cries and shouts of boys,
Such as the troubled theatres oft-times annoys.

Thereat the champions both stood still a space,
To weeten¹⁹ what that sudden clamour meant
Lo! where they spied, with speedy whirling
pace,

One in a chariot of strange furniment²⁰
Toward them driving like a storm out sent.
The chariot deck'd was in wondrous wise
With gold and many a gorgeous ornament,
After the Persian monarchs' antique guise,
Such as the maker's self could best by art de-
vise.²¹

And drawn it was (that wonder is to tell)
Of²² two grim lions, taken from the wood,
In which their pow'r all others did excel;
Now made forget their former cruel mood,

¹ Pierced.

² Secretly.

⁴ Prepared.

⁶ Dress, array.

⁸ Equal terms.

¹⁰ Decayed, impaired.

³ Confronting.

⁵ Pain, affliction.

⁷ Of ordinary strength.

⁹ Natural.

¹¹ Healed; French, "guérir," to cure.

¹² Husbandman's.

¹⁴ Sword.

¹⁶ Same as "teen;" grief.

¹⁸ Denote.

²⁰ Furnishing, equipment.

¹³ Affirmed.

¹⁵ Injury.

¹⁷ End.

¹⁹ Learn.

²¹ Describe. ²² By.

To obey their rider's hest,¹ as seem'd good :
And therein sat a lady² passing fair
And bright, that seem'd born of angels' brood ;
And, with her beauty, bounty did compare³
Whether of them in her should have the greater
share.

Thereto⁴ she learn'd was in magic leare,⁵
And all the arts that subtile wits discover,
Having therein been train'd many a year,
And well instructed by the Fay her mother,
That in the same she far excell'd all other :
Who, understanding by her mighty art
Of th' evil plight in which her dearest brother
Now stood, came forth in haste to take his part,
And pacify the strife which caus'd so deadly
smart.

And, as she pass'd through th' unruly press
Of people thronging thick her to behold,
Her angry team, breaking their bonds of peace,
Great heaps of them, like sheep in narrow fold,
For haste did over-run in dust enroll'd ;
That, thorough rude confusion of the rout,
Some fearing shriek'd, some being harm'd
howl'd,
Some laugh'd for sport, some did for wonder
shout,
And some, that would seem wise, their wonder
turn'd to doubt.

In her right hand a rod of peace she bore,
About the which two serpents weren wound,
Entrail'd⁶ mutually in lovely lore,⁷
And by the tails together firmly bound,
And both were with one olive garland crown'd
(Like to the rod which Maia's son⁸ doth wield,
Wherewith the hellish fiends he doth confound) ;
And in her other hand a cup she held,
The which was with Nepenthe to the brim up-
fill'd.

Nepenthe is a drink of sov'reign grace,
Devis'd by the gods for to assuage
Heart's grief, and bitter gall away to chase
Which stirs up anguish and contentious rage :
Instead thereof sweet peace and quietage
It doth establish in the troubled mind.
Few men, but such as sober are and sage,
Are by the gods to drink thereof assign'd ;
But such as drink eternal happiness do find.
Such famous men, such worthies of the earth,
As Jove will have advanc'd to the sky,
And there made gods, though born of mortal
birth,
For their high merits and great dignity,
Are wont, before they may to heaven fly,
To drink hereof ; whereby all cares forepast⁹
Are wash'd away quite from their memory :
So did those old heróes hereof taste,
Before that they in bliss amongst the gods were
plac'd.

¹ Commandment.

² Cambina, the sister of Triamond.

³ Her goodness or virtue competed.

⁴ Moreover.

⁵ Lore.

⁶ Interwoven.

⁷ Loving fashion.

⁸ Mercury ; the rod is the "caduceus," the power of
which is described at page 404.

⁹ Gone past.

Much more of price and of more gracious power
Is this, than that same water of Ardenne,¹⁰
The which Rinaldo drank in happy hour,
Describ'd by that famous Tuscan pen :
For that had might to change the hearts of men
From love to hate, a change of evil choice :
But this doth hatred make in love to bren,¹¹
And heavy heart with comfort doth rejoice.
Who would not to this virtue rather yield his
voice ?

At last, arriving by the list's side,
She with her rod did softly smite the rail,
Which straight flew ope and gave her way to
ride.

Eftsoons out of her coach she gan avail,¹²
And, passing fairly forth, did bid all hail
First to her brother whom she lov'd dear,
That so to see him made her heart to quail ;
And next to Cambell, whose sad rueful cheer
Made her to change her hue, and hidden love t'
appear.

They lightly her requit¹³ (for small delight
They had as then her long to entertain),
And eft¹⁴ them turn'd both again to fight :
Which when she saw, down on the bloody plain
Herself she threw, and tears gan shed amain ;
Amongst her tears immixing prayers meek,
And with her prayers reasons, to restrain
From bloody strife ; and blessed peace to seek,
By all that unto them was dear, did them be-
seek.¹⁵

But when as all might naught with them prevail,
She smote them lightly with her pow'rful wand :
Then suddenly, as if their hearts did fail,
Their wrathful blades down fell out of their hand,
And they, like men astonish'd, still did stand.
Thus whilst their minds were doubtfully dis-
traught,
And mighty spirits bound with mightier band,
Her golden cup to them for drink she raught,¹⁶
Whereof, full glad for thirst, each drank a
hearty draught :

Of which so soon as they once tasted had,
Wonder it is that sudden change to see :
Instead of strokes, each other kiss'd glad,
And lovely hal'd,¹⁷ from fear of treason free,
And plighted hands, for ever friends to be.
When all men saw this sudden change of things,
So mortal foes so friendly to agree,
For passing joy, which so great marvel brings,
They all gan shout aloud, that all the heaven
rings.

The gentle Canacé in haste descended from
her lofty chair, and greeted Cambina in lovely
wise ; all went homewards in joy and friendli-
ness ; and many days they spent feasting in per-
fect love. For Triamond had Canacé to wife,

¹⁰ In the first canto of the "Orlando Innamorata,"
Boiardo notices this fountain, prepared by Merlin to
take away the love of Tristram for La Belle Isoude ;
the knight, however, never drank of its waters.

¹¹ Burn.

¹² Descend.

¹³ Saluted in return.

¹⁴ After ; speedily.

¹⁵ Beseech.

¹⁶ Reached.

¹⁷ Lovingly embraced.

and Cambell took Cambina to his fere;¹ and never had such lovers been found elsewhere since their day.

CANTO IV.

Satyrane makes a tournament

For love of Florimell:

Britomart wins the prize from all,

And Artegall doth quell.

RETURNING from the retrospective episode in which he has shown the origin of the friendship between Cambell and Triamond, the poet takes up his story at the point where the friends and their ladies were overtaken by the "discordful crew" of which Duessa and Até were the inspiring members. Blandamour, thinking so to advance himself in the grace of the stranger ladies, began to insult and revile their knights; who would have sharply punished him, but that Cambina assuaged the fierceness of their mood. Then they all rode on in friendly converse; among other matters, of the great tourney which was to be held "for that rich girdle of fair Florimell, the prize of her which did in beauty most excel." All agreed to go thither and try their fortunes. On the way they were joined by Braggadocio, who recognised in the snowy Florimell the lady whom Sir Ferragut had taken from him and Sir Blandamour from Ferragut; and the boaster challenged her anew. Blandamour scornfully proposed that the hag Até should be set beside Florimell, and that whoever was beaten should have the hag, and always ride with her until he got another lady. Amid the merriment of the company, Braggadocio declared that he never thought to imperil his person in fight for such a hag; but if they had sought another lady alike fair and bright with Florimell, he would spend his life to justify his right. The revilings of Florimell, and the provocations of Até, were powerless to prompt him to fight; "for in base mind nor friendship dwells nor enmity." But Cambell "shut up all in jest," advising that all should keep themselves fresh and strong against the tournament, when their quarrel might be tried out. At last they reached the place of contest, where "many a brave knight and many a dainty dame" had already met; and there this brave crew divided—Blandamour with those of his company going on one side, the rest on the other, while Braggadocio, the better to attract notice, took his place alone.

Then first of all forth came Sir Satyrane,
Bearing that precious relic in an ark
Of gold, that bad eyes might it not profane;
Which drawing softly forth out of the dark,
He open show'd, that all men it might mark;
A gorgeous girdle, curiously embost

With pearl and precious stone, worth many a mark;²

Yet did the workmanship far pass the cost:
It was the same which lately Florimell had lost.

The same aloft he hung in open view,
To be the prize of beauty and of might;
The which, eftsoons discover'd, to it drew
The eyes of all, allur'd with close³ delight,
And hearts quite robb'd⁴ with so glorious sight,
That all men threw out vows and wishes vain.
Thrice happy lady, and thrice happy knight,
Them seem'd, that could so goodly riches gain,
So worthy of the peril, worthy of the pain.

Then took the bold Sir Satyrane in hand
A huge great spear, such as he wont to wield,
And, 'vancing⁵ forth from all the other band
Of knights, address'd his maiden-headed shield,⁶
Showing himself all ready for the field:
'Gainst whom there singled from the other side
A Paynim knight that well in arms was skill'd,
And had in many a battle oft been tried,
Hight Bruncheval the bold, who fiercely forth
did ride.

Furiously they met, "as two fierce bulls, that strive the rule to get of all the herd;" both were felled to the ground; and long they were unable to wield their idle spears. Espying this, the noble Ferramont pricked forth to aid Satyrane; and against him Blandamour rode with all his strength—only to fall to the earth, "tumbled horse and man." Paridell advanced to the rescue, but was likewise overthrown. Braggadocio, whose turn came next, lingered like a coward; then, all impatient, Triamond stepped forth, and bore Ferramont to ground. Sir Devon, Sir Douglas, and Sir Palimord, in succession went down beneath the strokes of Triamond. Meantime, Satyrane, recovering his senses, and perceiving the merciless affray which doughty Triamond had wrought "unto the noble Knights of Maidenhead," felt his mighty heart almost rent in two for very gall, and, gathering up his weapons, remounted his horse. Then, "like spark of fire that from the anvil glode,"⁷ he rode forth where the valiant Triamond was driving all before him. Striking with his whole power at Triamond, Satyrane pierced him through the side so sorely that he had to withdraw out of the field; the challenging party had the best of the day, until at gloomy evening the trumpet bade them forbear; "so Satyrane that day was judg'd to bear the bell." Next day the tourney began anew; the hardy Satyrane, with all his noble crew, first appearing in place; but Triamond was detained from the field by his wound. Therefore Cambell, to save his friend's honour, assumed his arms and shield, and went forth to fight. He found Satyrane lord of the field, "triumphing in great joy and jollity;" and he rode at the victor of yesterday so fiercely, that both went to the ground. Rising, they betook themselves to their swords, and, to the amaze-

¹ Companion, consort.

² A coin.

³ Secret.

⁴ Carried away.

⁵ Advancing.

⁶ Bearing the head of the Maiden Queen. See the opening of canto ix., book ii., page 390.

⁷ Glanced.

ment of all the rest, fought "as two wild boars together grappling go, chafing, and foaming choler each against his foe." Satyrane's steed at last stumbled, and nigh cast his rider; Cambell, pursuing his advantage, tumbled him from his saddle by a blow on the head, and then leaped down to rend away, as the victor's meed, his arms and shield. But all at once a crowd of swords was laid upon him; a hundred knights beset him, hoping to rescue Satyrane, and take Cambell prisoner.

He with their multitude was naught dismay'd,
But with stout courage turn'd upon them all,
And with his brand-iron¹ round about him laid;
Of which he dealt large alms, as did befall:
Like as a lion, that by chance doth fall
Into the hunters' toil, doth rage and roar,
In royal heart disdaining to be thrall:²
But all in vain: for what might one do more?
They have him taken captive, though it grieve
him sore.

Whereof when news to Triamond was brought,
There as he lay, his wound he soon forgot,
And, starting up, straight for his armour sought:
In vain he sought; for there he found it not;
Cambello it away before had got:
Cambello's arms therefore he on him threw,
And lightly issued forth to take his lot.
There he in troop found all that warlike crew
Leading his friend away, full sorry to his view.

Into the thickest of that knightly press
He thrust, and smote down all that was between,
Carried with fervent zeal; nor did he cease,
Till that he came where he had Cambell seen
Like captive thrall two other knights atween:
There he amongst them cruel havoc makes,
That they which lead him soon enforc'd be'n
To let him loose to save their proper stakes;³
Who, being freed, from one a weapon fiercely
takes:

With that he drives at them with dreadful might,
Both in remembrance of his friend's great harm,
And in revengement of his own despite:
So both together give a new alarm,
As if but now the battle wax'd warm.
As when two greedy wolves do break by force
Into a herd, far from the husband⁴ farm,
They spoil and ravin⁵ without all remorse:
So did these two through all the field their foes
enforce.

Fiercely they follow'd on their bold emprise,
Till trumpets' sound did warn them all to rest:
Then all with one consent did yield the prize
To Triamond and Cambell as the best:
But Triamond to Cambell it relest,⁶
And Cambell it to Triamond transferr'd;
Each labouring t' advance the other's gest,⁷
And make his praise before his own preferr'd:
So that the doom⁸ was to another day deferr'd.

¹ Sword.² Enslaved.³ Husbandman's.⁴ Released, resigned.⁵ Decision.⁶ Savage or wild dress.⁷ Their own lives.⁸ Make booty.⁹ Achievement.¹⁰ Tell.¹¹ Adorned, trimmed.

On the third day, Sir Satyrane excelled all the other knights in prowess, and "still the Knights of Maidenhead the better won" in the fierce jousts.

Till that there enter'd on the other side
A stranger knight, from whence no man could
read,⁹

In quaint disguise, full hard to be descried:
For all his armour was like salvage weed,¹⁰
With woody moss bedight,¹¹ and all his steed
With oaken leaves attrap'd,¹² that seem'd fit
For salvage wight, and thereto well agreed
His word,¹³ which on his ragged shield was writ,
Salvagee sans finesse,¹⁴ showing secret wit.

The new comer "charged his spear" at the first that appeared in his sight—the stout Sir Sanglier—and dismounted him; Sir Brianor shared the same fate:

Then, ere his hand he rear'd, he overthrew
Sev'n knights one after other as they came:
And, when his spear was burst,¹⁵ his sword he
drew,

The instrument of wrath, and with the same
Far'd like a lion in his bloody game,
Hewing and slashing shields and helmets bright,
And beating down whatever nigh him came,
That ev'ry one gan shun his dreadful sight
No less than death itself, in dangerous affright.
Much wonder'd all men what or whence he came,
That did amongst the troops so tyrannize;
And each of other gan inquire his name:
But, when they could not learn it by no wise,
Most answerable to his wild disguise
It seem'd, him to term the Salvage Knight:
But certes his right name was otherwise,
Though known to few, that Artegall he hight,
The doughtiest knight that liv'd that day, and
most of might.

Thus was Sir Satyrane, with all his band,
By his sole manhood and achievement stout,
Dismay'd,¹⁶ that none of them in field durst stand,
But beaten were and chas'd all about.
So he continu'd all that day throughout,
Till ev'ning that the sun gan downward bend:
Then rush'd forth out of the thickest rout
A stranger knight, that did his glory shend:¹⁷
So naught may be esteem'd happy till the end!

He at his entrance charg'd his pow'rful spear
At Artegall, in midst of his pride,
And therewith smote him on his umbrière¹⁸
So sore, that tumbling back he down did slide
Over his horse's tail above a stride;¹⁹
Whence little lust²⁰ he had to rise again.
Which Cambell seeing, much the same envied,
And ran at him with all his might and main;
But shortly was likewise seen lying on the plain.
Whereat full inly wroth was Triamond,
And cast²¹ t' avenge the shame done to his friend:
But by²² his friend himself eke soon he found,

¹² Trapped, equipped.¹³ Wildness without art.¹⁴ Subdued.¹⁵ Visor of the helmet.¹⁶ More than a stride—a considerable way.¹⁷ Inclination.¹⁸ Resolved, tried¹⁹ Motto.²⁰ Broken.²¹ Obscure, abase.²² Beside.

In no less need of help than him he ween'd.¹
 All which when Blandamour from end to end
 Beheld, he wox therewith displeas'd sore,
 And thought in mind it shortly to amend :
 His spear he feuter'd,² and at him it bore ;
 But with no better fortune than the rest before.

Full many others at him likewise ran ;
 But all of them likewise dismounted were :
 Nor, certes, wonder ; for no pow'r of man
 Could bide³ the force of that enchanted spear,
 The which this famous Britomart did bear ;
 With which she wondrous deeds of arms achiev'd,
 And overthrew whatever came her near,
 That all those stranger knights full sore aggriev'd,
 And that late weaker band of challengers reliev'd.

Like as in summer's day, when raging heat
 Doth burn the earth, and boil'd rivers dry,
 That all brute beasts, forc'd to refrain from meat,
 Do hunt for shade where shrouded they may lie,
 And, missing it, fain⁴ from themselves to fly ;
 All travellers tormented are with pain :

A watery cloud doth overcast the sky,
 And poureth forth a sudden show'r of rain,
 That all the wretched world recomforteth again :

So did the warlike Britomart restore
 The prize to Knights of Maidenhead that day,
 Which else was like to have been lost, and bore
 The praise of prowess from them all away.

Then shrilling trumpets loudly gan to bray,
 And bade them leave their labours and long toil
 To joyous feast and other gentle play,
 Where beauty's prize should win that precious
 spoil :

Where I with sound of trump will also rest a
 while.

CANTO V.

*The ladies for the girdle strive
 Of famous Florimell :
 Scudamour, coming to Care's House,
 Doth sleep from him expel.⁵*

"AFTER the proof of prowess ended well," came
 the contention of the ladies for the girdle of fair
 Florimell, which was to be awarded to her that
 most excelled in beauty's sovereign grace.

That girdle gave the virtue of chaste love
 And wifehood true to all that did it bear ;
 But whosoever contrary doth prove
 Might not the same about her middle wear,
 But it would loose, or else asunder tear.
 Whilom it was (as Faeries wont report)
 Dame Venus' girdle,⁶ by her 'steemed⁷ dear,
 What time she us'd to live in wifely sort ;
 But laid aside whenso she us'd her looser sport.

Her husband Vulcan whilom for her sake,
 When first he lov'd her with heart entire,
 This precious ornament, they say, did make,

¹ Thought.

² Put in the rest, made ready.

³ Abide, withstand.

⁴ Are fain or glad.

⁵ That is, "Care doth expel sleep from Scudamour."

And wrought in Lemnos with unquenched fire :
 And afterward did for her love's first hire
 Give it to her, for ever to remain,
 Therewith to bind lascivious desire,
 And loose affections straitly to restrain ;
 Which virtue it for ever after did retain.

The same one day, when she herself dispos'd
 To visit her beloved paramour,
 The god of War, she from her middle loos'd,
 And left behind her in her secret bow'r
 On Acidalian⁸ mount, where many an hour
 She with the pleasant Graces went to play.
 There Florimell in her first age's flow'r
 Was foster'd by those Graces (as they say),
 And brought with her from thence that goodly
 belt away.

"That goodly belt was Cestus hight by name,"
 and by its owner esteemed dear as her life ; and
 many ladies sought to win it, "for peerless she
 was thought that did it bear." After due feast-
 ing, the judges "into the martial plain adown
 descended" to decide the doubtful case. But
 first they determined which of the knights had
 won the wager ; and to Satyrane was given the
 credit of the first day, to Triamond that of the
 second, and to the Knight of the Ebon Spear
 —Britomart—the glory of the third and of all
 the three days ; therefore to her the fairest
 lady was adjudged—at which Artegall much
 repined, and inwardly vowed vengeance. The
 knights now proceeded to bring forward their
 ladies, as competitors for the virtuous belt.
 First Cambell led forward Cambina ; then Tri-
 mond his dear Canacé ; then Paridell his false
 Duessa ; then Ferramont his Lucida, "full fair
 and sheen ;" and a hundred others, such, that
 no man had ever seen so many heavenly faces
 assembled in one place.

At last, the most redoubted Britoness
 Her lovely Amoret did open shew ;
 Whose face, discover'd, plainly did express
 The heav'nly portrait of bright angels' hue.
 Well ween'd all, which her that time did view,
 That she should surely bear the belt away ;
 Till Blandamour, who thought he had the true
 And very Florimell, did her display :
 The sight of whom, once seen, did all the rest
 dismay.

For all before that seem'd fair and bright,
 Now base and contemptible did appear,
 Compar'd to her that shone as Phœbé's light
 Amongst the lesser stars in ev'ning clear.
 All that her saw with wonder ravish'd were,
 And ween'd no mortal creature she should be,
 But some celestial shape that flesh did bear :
 Yet all were glad there Florimell to see ;
 Yet thought that Florimell was not so fair as
 she.

As guileful goldsmith that, by secret skill,
 With golden foil doth finely overspread

⁶ The cestus of Venus, the text of some of Martial's
 epigrams : xiv. 206, 207.

⁷ Esteemed.

⁸ Venus was sometimes called "Acidalia," from the
 fountain on Mount Acidalius, where she used to bathe
 with the Graces. See canto x., book vi.

Some baser metal, which commend he will
Unto the vulgar for good gold instead,
He much more goodly gloss thereon doth shed
To hide his falsehood, than if it were true :
So hard this idol¹ was to be aread,²
That Florimell herself in all men's view
She seem'd to pass : so forgèd things do fairest
shew.

By the verdict of all, the golden belt was
awarded to the false Florimell ; it would, how-
ever, by no means meet "about her middle
small"—but constantly loosened itself, "as
feeling secret blame," to the general amazement.
Many other ladies likewise tried to fasten it on
themselves, but to no purpose.

Which when that scornful Squire of Dames did
view,

He loudly gan to laugh, and thus to jest ;
"Alas ! for pity that so fair a crew,
As like cannot be seen from east to west,
Cannot find one this girdle to invest !³
Fy on the man that did it first invent,
To shame us all with this *Ungirt unblest* !
Let never lady to his love assent,
That hath this day so many so unmanly shent."⁴

"Thereat all knights gan laugh, and ladies
lour," until Amoret's turn came ; and then the
girdle fitted her waist "without breach or let"
—much to the envy of all the rest, especially of
Florimell, who snatched the belt, and again
vainly attempted to tie it on her body. Never-
theless the belt was adjudged to her, and she to
Britomart ; but Britomart would not forego her
Amoret "for that strange dame, whose beauty's
wonderment she less esteem'd than th' other's
virtuous government." Florimell was then ad-
judged to the Salvage Knight ; but he had
already departed, "in great displeasure that he
could not get her ;" then to Triamond, "but
Triamond lov'd Canacé and other none ;" then
to Satyrane, "who was right glad to gain so
goodly meed." But Blandamour thereat greatly
grudged ; Paridell appealed from the decision
of the judges to single combat ; and many
other knights, impelled by Até, advanced claims
to Florimell. Among them was Braggadocio,
whose claim Florimell herself confessed ; much
to the wrath of the knights, who were about to
fight for her, when Satyrane interfered, and,
reminding them that "sweet is the love that
comes alone with willingness," proposed that
the lady should herself choose her lover. All
agreed, and each secretly prayed to Venus that
she might fall to his lot ; but she chose Bragga-
docio ; and the boaster secretly stole away with
her that same night, while the knights were
quarrelling and fuming over their mortification.
After the pair went all the remaining knights,
in hope to save such a noble prey from a wight

so unworthy : but Britomart, taking with her
Amoret, rode forth on her first adventure—"to
seek her lov'd, making blind Love her guide."
Amoret "also sought her lover long miswent,"
the gentle Scudamour ; to whose fortunes, after
he had heard Até's false account of Amoret's
infidelity, the poet now returns. Attended by
Glaucé, the Knight went about to seek "re-
venge on blameless Britomart."

So as they travellèd, the drooping Night,
Cover'd with cloudy storm and bitter show'r,
That dreadful seem'd to ev'ry living wight,
Upon them fell, before her timely hour ;⁵
That forcèd them to seek some covert bow'r,
Where they might hide their heads in quiet rest,
And shroud their persons from that stormy
stowre.⁶

Not far away, not meet for any guest,
They spied a little cottage, like some poor man's
nest.

Under a steep hill's side it placèd was,
There where the moulder'd earth had cav'd⁷ the
bank ;

And fast beside a little brook did pass
Of muddy water, that like puddle stank,
By which few crooked sallows⁸ grew in rank ;⁹
Whereto approaching nigh, they heard the sound
Of many iron hammers beating rank,¹⁰
And answering their weary turns around ;¹¹
That seem'd some blacksmith dwelt in that de-
sert ground.

There ent'ring in, they found the goodman's self
Full busily unto his work y-bent ;
Who was, to wit, a wretched wearish¹² elf,
With hollow eyes and raw-bone cheeks forspent,¹³
As if he had in prison long been pent :
Full black and grisly did his face appear,
Besmear'd with smoke that nigh his eye-sight
blent ;¹⁴

With rugged beard, and hoary shagged hair,
The which he never went to comb, or comely
shear.

Rude was his garment, and to rags all rent ;
Nor better had he, nor for better cared :
With blister'd hands amongst the cinders brent,¹⁵
And fingers filthy, with long nails unpared,
Right fit to rend the food on which he fared.
His name was Care ; a blacksmith by his trade,
That neither day nor night from working spared,
But to small purpose iron wedges made ;
Those be Unquiet Thoughts, that careful minds
invade.

In which his work he had six servants prest,¹⁶
About the anvil standing evermore
With huge great hammers, that did never rest
From heaping strokes which thereon soursèd¹⁷
sore :

All six strong grooms, but one than other more ;
For by degrees they all were disagreed ;

¹ Image, imitation.

² Put on.

³ Before her usual time.

⁴ Onset (of the elements).

⁵ Willows. ⁹ In a row.

⁶ Detected.

⁷ Disgraced.

⁸ Hollowed.

¹⁰ Violently.

¹¹ Being beaten in measure.

¹² Utterly spent or pined away.

¹³ Blinded.

¹⁴ Ready at hand ; French, "prêt."

¹⁵ Struck, descended, forcibly.

¹⁶ Worn out, wasted.

¹⁷ Burnt.

So likewise did the hammers which they bore
Like bells in greatness orderly succeed,
That he, which was the last, the first did far
exceed.

He like a monstrous giant seem'd in sight,
Far passing Brontes or Pyracmon¹ great,
The which in Lipari do day and night
Frame thunderbolts for Jove's avengeful threat.
So dreadfully he did the anvil beat,
That seem'd to dust he shortly would it drive:
So huge his hammer, and so fierce his heat,
That seem'd a rock of diamond it could rive
And rend asunder quite, if he thereto list² strive.

Sir Scudamour, there ent'ring, much admir'd³
The manner of their work and weary pain;
And, having long beheld, at last inquir'd
The cause and end thereof; but all in vain;
For they for naught would from their work re-
frain,

Nor let his speeches come unto their ear.
And eke the breathful bellows blew amain,
Like to the northern wind, that none could hear;
Those Pensiveness did move; and Sighs the
bellows were.

Which when that warrior saw, he said no more,
But in his armour laid him down to rest:
To rest he laid him down upon the floor
(Whilom for venturous knights the bedding best),
And thought his weary limbs to have redrest.⁴
And that old aged dame, his faithful squire,
Her feeble joints laid eke adown to rest;
That needed much her weak age to desire,
After so long a travel which them both did tire.
There lay Sir Scudamour long while expecting⁵
When gentle sleep his heavy eyes would close;
Oft changing sides, and oft new place electing,
Where better seem'd he might himself repose;
And oft in wrath he thence again uprose;
And oft in wrath he laid him down again.
But, wheresoe'er he did himself dispose,
He by no means could wish'd ease obtain:
So ev'ry place seem'd painful, and each changing
vain.

And evermore, when he to sleep did think,
The hammers' sound his senses did molest;
And evermore, when he began to wink,
The bellows' noise disturb'd his quiet rest,
Nor suffer'd sleep to settle in his breast.
And all the night the dogs did bark and howl
About the house, at scent of stranger guest:
And now the crowing cock, and now the owl
Loud shrieking, him afflicted to the very soul.

And, if by fortune any little nap
Upon his heavy eyelids chanc'd to fall,
Eftsoons one of those villains him did rap
Upon his head-piece with his iron mall;⁶
That he was soon awak'd therewithal,

¹ Two of the Cyclopes.

² Wondered at.

³ Awaiting (the time).

⁴ Started.

⁵ On the subject which annoyed him.

⁶ The fear or care that occupied him by day.

⁷ Britomart and Amoret; Scudamour still believed Britomart a man.

² Pleased (to).

⁴ Restored.

⁶ Club, hammer.

And lightly started up as one afraid,
Or as if one him suddenly did call:
So oftentimes he out of sleep abraid,⁷
And then lay musing long on that him ill apaid.⁸

So long he mus'd, and so long he lay,
That at the last his weary sprite, opprest
With fleshly weakness, which no creature may
Long time resist, gave place to kindly rest,
That all his senses did full soon arrest:
Yet, in his soundest sleep, his daily fear⁹
His idle brain gan busily molest,
And made him dream those two¹⁰ disloyal were:
The things, that day most minds, at night do
most appear.

With that the wicked carl, the master smith,
A pair of red-hot iron tongs did take
Out of the burning cinders, and therewith
Under his side him nipp'd, that, forc'd to wake,
He felt his heart for very pain to quake,
And started up aveng'd for to be
On him the which his quiet slumber brake:
Yet, looking round about him, none could see;
Yet did the smart remain, though he himself¹¹
did flee.

In such disquiet and heart-fretting pain
He all that night, that too long night, did pass.
And now the day out of the ocean main
Began to peep above this earthly mass,
With pearly dew sprinkling the morning grass:
Then up he rose like heavy lump of lead,
That in his face, as in a looking-glass,
The signs of anguish one might plainly read,
And guess the man to be dismay'd with jealous
dread.

"Unto his lofty steed he clomb anon," and,
accompanied by Glauce, "forth upon his former
voyage far'd."

CANTO VI.

Both Scudamour and Artegall

Do fight with Britomart:

He sees her face: doth fall in love,

And soon from her depart.

WHAT equal torment to the grief of mind
And pining anguish hid in gentle heart,
That inly feeds itself with thoughts unkind,
And nourisheth her own consuming smart?
What medicine can any leach's art
Yield such a sore, that doth her grievance hide,
And will to none her malady impart!¹²
Such was the wound that Scudamour did gride:¹³
For which Dan Phoebus' self¹⁴ cannot a salve
provide.

Having quitted the House of Care, the Knight

¹¹ The master smith, who had inflicted the smart.

¹² This passage strongly recalls Shakespeare's "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?" &c.; "Macbeth," act iv. scene iii. "Macbeth" was written nine years after Spenser published his second three books.

¹³ Pierce.

¹⁴ Apollo was the god who afforded help, and therefore is sometimes made the god of the healing art—a position due strictly to his son Æsculapius.

rode on, full of melancholy, until he espied "an armed knight under a forest side, sitting in shade beside his grazing steed." The stranger was about to attack Scudamour, who prepared to rencounter him in equal race; but suddenly the first lowered his spear, and, calling Scudamour by his name, craved pardon for the offence he had almost committed. In surprise, Scudamour inquired who he was; but was asked to excuse him from discovering his name aright, and call him "the Salvage Knight." A stranger knight had done him shame and dishonour; and he waited there to wreak on him that foul despite, whenever he might pass. Learning that the offending knight was he of the ebon spear (Britomart, yet unknown by name) Scudamour "swell'd in every part for fell despite," and related his own grievance against that knight, who had reft from him his love, "and eke defiled with foul villainy the sacred pledge which in his faith was left." Both agreed to wreak their wraths on Britomart; and soon they saw her approach. By his own request, Scudamour first attacked; but the warlike Maid tumbled both horse and man to ground, where they lay. Artegall in turn attacked, and was unhorsed; but, lightly recovering, he assailed his enemy with his sword, so furiously that she had to give ground. A stroke of his sword, glancing down her back, cut her horse in two, compelling her also to alight and fight on foot:

Like as the lightning-brand from riven sky,
Thrown out by angry Jove in his vengeance,
With dreadful force falls on some steeple high;
Which battering down, it on the church doth
glance,

And tears it all with terrible mischance.
Yet she no whit dismay'd her steed forsook;
And, casting from her that enchanted lance,
Unto her sword and shield her soon betook;
And therewithal at him right furiously she
strook.¹

So furiously she struck in her first heat,
While with long fight on foot he breathless was,
That she him forc'd backward to retreat,
And yield unto her weapon way to pass:
Whose raging rigour neither steel nor brass
Could stay, but to the tender flesh it went,
And pour'd the purple blood forth on the grass;
That all his mail y-riv'd,² and plates y-rent,
Show'd all his body bare unto the cruel dent.³

At length, when as he saw her hasty heat
Abate, and panting breath begin to fail,
He through long sufferance⁴ growing now more
great,

Rose in his strength, and gan her fresh assail,
Heaping huge strokes as thick as show'r of hail,
And lashing dreadfully at every part,
As if he thought her soul to disentrail.⁵
Ah! cruel hand, and thrice more cruel heart,
That work'st such wreck on her to whom thou
dearest art!

¹ Struck.² Cloven.³ Blow.⁴ Patience.⁵ Dislodge.⁶ Front of the helmet.⁷ Clear, pure.

After a long contest, Artegall, still regaining strength as his adversary's declined, gathered all his forces for a final blow.

The wicked stroke upon her helmet chanc'd,
And with the force, which in itself it bore,
Her ventail⁶ shear'd away, and thence forth
glanc'd

Adown in vain, nor harm'd her any more.
With that, her angel's face, unseen afore,
Like to the ruddy morn appear'd in sight,
Dew'd with silver drops through sweating sore;
But somewhat redder than becom'd aright,
Through toilsome heat and labour of her weary
fight:

And round about the same her yellow hair,
Having through stirring loos'd their wonted
band,

Like to a golden border did appear,
Fram'd in goldsmith's forge with cunning hand:
Yet goldsmith's cunning could not understand
To frame such subtile wire, so shiny clear;
For it did glister like the golden sand
The which Pactolus, with his waters sheer,⁷
Throws forth upon the rivage⁸ round about him
near.

And as his hand he up again did rear,
Thinking to work on her his utmost wrack,⁹
His pow'rless arm, benumb'd with secret fear,
From his revengeful purpose shrunk aback,
And cruel sword out of his fingers slack
Fell down to ground, as if the steel had sense
And felt some ruth,¹⁰ or sense his hand did lack,
Or both of them did think obedience
To do to so divine a beauty's excellence.

And he himself, long gazing thereupon,
At last fell humbly down upon his knee,
And of his wonder made religion,¹¹
Weening some heav'nly goddess he did see,
Or else unweeting¹² what it else might be;
And pardon her besought his error frail,
That had done outrage in so high degree:
Whilst trembling horror did his sense assail,
And made each member quake, and manly heart
to quail.

Nathless she, full of wrath for that late stroke,
All that long while upheld her wrathful hand,
With fell intent on him to be y-wroke;¹³
And, looking stern, still over him did stand,
Threat'ning to strike unless he would with-
stand;¹⁴

And bade him rise, or surely he should die.
But, die or live, for naught he would upstand;
But her of pardon pray'd more earnestly,
Or wreak on him her will for so great injury.

Scudamour, recovering from his overthrow, now drew near, and, "turning fear to faint devotion," worshipped the Maid as some celestial vision. Glaucé also advanced, and persuaded her to grant to those warriors a truce. Then they lifted their beavers, and showed her their faces.

⁸ Bank.⁹ Wreck, destruction.¹⁰ Pity.¹¹ Changed his wonder into worship.¹² Unknowing.¹³ Revenged.¹⁴ Resist.

When Britomart with sharp adviseful¹ eye
Beheld the lovely face of Artegall,
Temper'd with sternness and stout majesty,
She gan eftsoons it to her mind to call
To be the same which, in her father's hall,
Long since in that enchanted glass she saw :
Therewith her wrathful courage gan appall,
And haughty spirits meekly to adaw,²
That her enhanc'd³ hand she down gan soft
withdraw.

Yet she it forc'd to have again upheld,
As feigning choler which was turn'd to cold :
But ever, when his visage she beheld,
Her hand fell down, and would no longer hold
The wrathful weapon gainst his count'nance
bold :

But, when in vain to fight she oft assay'd,
She arm'd her tongue, and thought at him to
scold :

Nathless her tongue not to her will obey'd,
But brought forth speeches mild when she would
have missaid.⁴

Soudamour, inly glad to find that Até's tale
of Amoret's infidelity was false, congratulated
Sir Artegall by name on his submission to a
lady, since he had been wont to despise them
all :

Soon as she heard the name of Artegall,
Her heart did leap, and all her heart-strings
tremble

For sudden joy and secret fear withal ;
And all her vital powers, with motion nimble,
To succour it themselves gan there assemble ;
That by the swift recourse of flushing blood
Right plain appear'd, though she it would dis-
semble,
And feign'd still her former angry mood,
Thinking to hide the depth by troubling of the
flood.

When Glaucoé thus gan wisely all upknit ;
" Ye gentle knights, whom fortune here hath
brought

To be spectators of this uncouth fit⁵
Which secret fate hath in this lady wrought
Against the course of kind,⁶ ne marvel naught ;
Nor thenceforth fear the thing that hitherto
Hath troubled both your minds with idle thought,
Fearing lest she your loves away should woo ;
Fear'd in vain, since means ye see there wants
thereto.

" And you, Sir Artegall, the Salvage Knight,
Henceforth may not disdain that woman's
hand

Hath conquer'd you anew in second fight :
For whilom they have conquer'd sea, and land,
And heav'n itself, that naught may them with-
stand :

Nor henceforth be rebellious unto love,
That is the crown of knighthood and the band

Of noble minds, deriv'd from above,
Which, being knit with virtue, never will re-
move.

" And you, fair Lady-Knight, my dearest Dame,
Relent the rigour of your wrathful will,
Whose fire were better turn'd to other flame ;
And, wiping out remembrance of all ill,
Grant him your grace ; but so that he fulfil
The penance which ye shall to him impart ;⁷
For lovers' heav'n must pass by sorrow's hell."
Thereat full inly blush'd Britomart ;
But Artegall, close-smiling,⁸ joy'd in secret
heart.

Yet durst he not make love so suddenly,
Nor think th' affection of her heart to draw
From one to other⁹ so quite contrary :
Besides her modest countenance he saw
So goodly grave, and full of princely awe,
That it his ranging fancy did refrain,
And looser thoughts to lawful bounds withdraw ;
Whereby the passion grew more fierce and fain,¹⁰
Like to a stubborn steed whom strong hand
would restrain.

Soudamour now asked for news of his Amo-
ret ; but Britomart could give him none. She
had done all in her power to preserve the lady
from peril and fear, after they had quitted the
scene of tournament :

" Till on a day, as through a desert wild
We travell'd, both weary of the way,
We did alight, and sat in shadow mild ;
Where fearless I to sleep me down did lay :
But, when as I did out of sleep abray,¹¹
I found her not where I her left whilére,¹²
But thought she wander'd was, or gone astray :
I call'd her loud, I sought her far and near ;
But nowhere could her find, nor tidings of her
hear."

The Knight, his heart thrilled with point of
deadly fear, stood pale and senseless, and was
to be comforted only by Britomart's assurance
that she would not leave him till Amoret had
been recovered or avenged. Then they all pro-
ceeded to a resting-place pointed out by Arte-
gall, where they were handsomely entertained,
until they recovered from their wounds and
weariness.

In all which time Sir Artegall made way
Unto the love of noble Britomart,
And with meek service and much suit did lay
Continual siege unto her gentle heart ;
Which, being whilom lanc'd with lovely dart,¹³
More eath¹⁴ was new impression to receive ;
However she her pain'd¹⁵ with womanish art
To hide her wound, that none might it perceive :
Vain is the art that seeks itself for to deceive.
So well he woo'd her, and so well he wrought
her,
With fair entreaty and sweet blandishment,

¹ Observant.

² Lower.

³ Spoken harshly.

⁴ Nature.

⁵ Secretly smiling.

⁶ Uplifted.

⁷ Strange passion.

⁸ Apportion.

⁹ From one extreme to the other—from hate to love.

¹⁰ Eager.

¹¹ Awake.

¹² A little while before.

¹³ Being long before pierced with the dart of love.

¹⁴ Easy.

¹⁵ Strove.

That at the length unto a bay he brought her,¹
 So as she to his speeches was content
 To lend an ear, and softly to relent.
 At last, through many vows which forth he
 pour'd,
 And many oaths, she yielded her consent
 To be his love, and take him for her lord,
 Till they with marriage meet might finish that
 accord.²

At last Artegall saw that it was time to
 depart on a hard adventure yet before him, and
 came to take leave of her; but he found his
 mistress full loth to let him go, and could
 appease her only by the promise to return in
 three months. So, early on the morrow, the
 Knight rode forth, unattended save by his lady,
 who rode with him a while.

And by the way she sundry purpose³ found
 Of this or that, the time for to delay,
 And of the perils whereto he was bound,
 The fear whereof seem'd much her to affray :
 But all she did was but to wear out day.
 Full oftentimes she leave of him did take ;
 And oft⁴ again devis'd somewhat to say,
 Which she forgot, whereby excuse to make :
 So loth she was his company for to forsake.

At last, when all her speeches she had spent,
 And new occasion fail'd her more to find,
 She left him to his fortune's government,
 And back return'd with right heavy mind
 To Scudamour, whom she had left behind ;
 With whom she went to seek fair Amoret,
 Her second care, though in another kind :
 For virtue's only sake, which doth beget
 True love and faithful friendship, she by her
 did set.⁵

CANTO VII.

*Amoret rapt by greedy Lust
 Belphebe saves from dread :
 The Squire her loves ; and, being blam'd,
 His days in dole doth lead.*

TAKING up the story of Amoret, the poet re-
 lates that she and Britomart, after leaving the
 tournament for beauty's prize, travelled long,
 and at last alighted to rest in a forest. Sleep
 surprised the eyelids of Britomart, while fair
 Amoret walked unsuspectingly through the
 wood. Suddenly one who rushed forth out of
 the thickest weed, snatched her up from the
 ground, and bore her off, shrieking too feebly to
 break the slumber of the British Maid.

It was, to wit, a wild and salvage man ;
 Yet was no man, but only like in shape,
 And eke in stature higher by a span ;
 All overgrown with hair, that could awshape⁶

A hardy heart ; and his wide mouth did gape
 With huge great teeth, like to a tusk'd boar :
 For he liv'd all on ravin⁷ and on rape
 Of men and beasts ; and fed on fleshly gore,
 The sign whereof yet stain'd his bloody lips
 afore.

His nether lip was not like man nor beast,
 But like a wide deep poke⁸ down hanging low,
 In which he wont the relics of his feast
 And cruel spoil, which he had spar'd,⁹ to stow :
 And over it his huge great nose did grow,
 Full dreadfully empurpled all with blood ;
 And down both sides two wide long ears did glow,
 And raught¹⁰ down to his waist when up he stood,
 More great than th' ears of elephants by Indus
 flood.

His waist was with a wreath of ivy green
 Engirt about, nor other garment wore ;
 For all his hair was like a garment seen ;
 And in his hand a tall young oak he bore,
 Whose knotty snags were sharpen'd all afore,
 And bath'd in fire for steel to be instead.
 But whence he was, or of what womb y-bore,¹¹
 Of beasts, or of the earth, I have not read ;
 But certes was with milk of wolves and tigers
 fed.

This ugly creature in his arms her snatch'd,
 And through the forest bore her quite away
 With briers and bushes all to-rent and scratch'd ;
 Nor care he had, nor pity of the prey,
 Which many a knight had sought for many a
 day :

He stay'd not, but, in his arms her bearing,
 Ran till he came to th' end of all his way,
 Unto his cave, far from all people's hearing,
 And there he threw her in, naught feeling, nor
 naught fearing.

Awaking from her swoon, Amoret heard,
 through the darkness and dread horror of the
 place, some one sighing and sobbing sore ; and
 inquired where she was and what would become
 of her. The sad voice foreshadowed a fate worse
 than death :

" This dismal day hath thee a captive made
 And vassal to the vilest wretch alive ;
 Whose curs'd usage and ungodly trade
 The heav'n's abhor, and into darkness drive :
 For on the spoil of women he doth live,
 Whose bodies chaste, whenever in his pow'r
 He may them catch, unable to gainstrive,¹²
 He with his shameful lust doth first deflow'r,
 And afterwards themselves doth cruelly devour.

" Now twenty days, by which the sons of men
 Divide their works, have pass'd through heaven
 sheen,¹³

Since I was brought into this doleful den ;
 During which space these sorry eyes have seen
 Sev'n women by him slain and eaten clean :¹⁴
 And now no more for him but I alone,
 And this old woman, here remaining be'n,

¹ He brought her to bay, or constrained her to sur-
 render.

³ Conversation.

⁵ Set any value by her.

² Agreement.

⁴ Soon.

⁶ Terrify.

⁷ Plunder.

⁹ Saved.

¹¹ Born.

¹³ Bright.

⁸ Sack.

¹⁰ Reached.

¹² Resist, strive against him.

¹⁴ Entirely.

Till thou cam'st hither to augment our moan ;
And of us three to-morrow he will sure eat one."

Amoret asked who it was that unlucky lot
had linked with her in the same chain ; and her
companion answered that she was "daughter
unto a lord of high degree," and had loved a
gentle swain, though but a squire of low degree,
against the will of her father. But she had
held faithfully to her love, and for him resolved
"both sire and friends and all forever to forego."
All things were ready for flight with her lover ;
but in the grove where she had made tryst with
him she found instead that "accurs'd carl of
hellish kind, the shame of men, and plague of
womankind," who seized upon her and brought
her to his den. There, as yet untouched, she re-
mained "his wretched thrall, the sad Æmilia."
"Thus of their evils as they did discourse,"
the villain himself rolled away the stone that
closed the cave, came rushing rudely in, and
began to prepare himself for his wonted sin ;
but Amoret, staying not to try the utmost end,
ran forth in haste, pursued by the monster.
"Full fast she flies, and far afore him goes,
nor feels the thorns and thickets prick her
tender toes."

Nor hedge, nor ditch, nor hill, nor dale she
stays,¹

But overleaps them all, like roebuck light,
And through the thickest makes her nighest
ways ;

And evermore, when with regardful sight
She looking back espies that grisly wight
Approaching nigh, she gins to mend her pace,
And makes her fear a spur to haste her flight ;
More swift than Myrrh' or Daphne in her race,²
Or any of the Thracian Nymphs in salvage chase.

Long so she fled, and so he follow'd long ;
Nor living aid for her on earth appears,
But if³ the heav'ns help to redress her wrong,
Mov'd with pity of her plenteous tears.
It fortun'd Belphebe with her peers,⁴
The woody Nymphs, and with that lovely boy,⁵
Was hunting then the leopards and the bears
In these wild woods, as was her wonted joy,
To banish sloth that oft doth noble minds annoy.

Timias and his companions were separated in
the chase ; and the gentle squire came on the
scene in time to intercept the monster as, with
grinning laughter, he was carrying the overtaken
Amoret back to his cave. Assailed by Timias,
the carl defended himself with his "craggy
club ;" and made a buckler of the lady, laughing
for delight whenever any little blow lighted on
her. At last the squire "left the pikehead
of his spear" in the monster's body ; "a stream
of coalblack blood thence gush'd amain," stain-
ing all Amoret's silken garments. Throwing
her rudely to the earth, the ravisher laid both
hands upon his club, and let drive at Timias so

sorely, that he had to give ground. Fortunately,
however, Belphebe had heard "the hideous
noise of their huge strokes," and came in view
"with bow in hand, and arrows ready bent." At
the sight the monster, knowing that in her he saw
"his death's sole instrument," fled away in fear.

Whom seeing fly, she speedily pursued,
With wing'd feet, as nimble as the wind,
And ever in her bow she ready shew'd
The arrow to his deadly mark design'd :⁶
As when Latona's daughter,⁷ cruel kind,
In vengeance of her mother's great disgrace,
With fell despite her cruel arrows tin'd⁸
'Gainst woeful Niobe's unhappy race,
That all the gods did moan her miserable case.

So well she sped her and so far she ventur'd,
That, ere unto his hellish den he raught,⁹
Ev'n as he ready was there to have enter'd,
She sent an arrow forth with mighty draught,¹⁰
That in the very door him overcaught,
And, in his nape arriving, through it thrill'd
His greedy throat, therewith in two distraught,¹¹
That all his vital spirits thereby spill'd,
And all his hairy breast with gory blood was fill'd.

Whom when on ground she grovelling saw to roll,
She ran in haste his life to have bereft ;
But, ere she could him reach, the sinful soul,
Having his carrion corse quite senseless left,
Was fled to hell, surcharg'd with spoil and theft :
Yet over him she there long gazing stood,
And oft admir'd¹² his monstrous shape, and oft
His mighty limbs, whilst all with filthy blood
The place there overflown seem'd like a sudden
flood.

Thenceforth she pass'd into his dreadful den,
Where naught but darksome dreariness she found,
Nor creature saw, but hearken'd now and then
Some little whisp'ring, and soft-groaning sound.
With that she ask'd, what ghosts there under
ground
Lay hid in horror of eternal night ;
And bade them, if so be they were not bound,
To come and show themselves before the light,
Now freed from fear and danger of that dismal
wight.

Then forth the sad Æmilia issued,
Yet trembling ev'ry joint through former fear ;
And after her the hag there with her mew'd,¹³
A foul and loathsome creature, did appear ;
A leman fit for such a lover dear :
That mov'd Belphebe her no less to hate,
Than for to rue¹⁴ the other's heavy cheer ;
Of whom she gan inquire of her estate ;¹⁵
Who all to her at large, as happen'd, did relate.

Thence she them brought toward the place
where late

She left the gentle Squire with Amoret :
There she him found by that new lovely mate,
Who lay the while in swoon, full sadly set,

¹ Stops for.

² See note 6, page 427.

³ Unless.

⁴ Companions.

⁵ Timias, the squire of Prince Arthur, whom Bel-
phebe had rescued and taken to her abode after his
conflict with the foresters ; canto v. book iii.

⁶ Directed.

⁷ Diana.

⁸ Aimed.

⁹ Reached.

¹⁰ Drawn with mighty force.

¹¹ Separated.

¹² Wondered at.

¹³ Imprisoned.

¹⁴ Pity.

¹⁵ Condition.

From her fair eyes wiping the dewy wet,
Which softly still'd,¹ and kissing them atween,
And handling soft the hurts which she did get:
For of that carl she sorely bruis'd had been,
Als'² of his own rash hands one wound was to
be seen.

Which when she saw with sudden glancing eye,
Her noble heart, with sight thereof, was fill'd
With deep disdain, and great indignity,
That in her wrath she thought them both have
thrill'd³

With that self arrow which the carl had kill'd:
Yet held her wrathful hand from vengeance sore:
But, drawing nigh, ere he her well beheld,
"Is this the faith?"⁴ she said—and said no
more,
But turn'd her face, and fled away for evermore.

He, seeing her depart, arose up light,
Right sore aggrieved at her sharp reproof,
And follow'd fast: but, when he came in sight,
He durst not nigh approach, but kept aloof,
For dread of her displeasure's utmost proof:
And evermore, when he did grace entreat,
And fram'd speeches fit for his behoof,
Her mortal arrows she at him did threat,
And forc'd him back with foul dishonour to
retreat.

At last, when long he follow'd had in vain,
Yet found no ease of grief nor hope of grace,
Unto those woods he turn'd back again,
Full of sad anguish and in heavy case:
And, finding there fit solitary place
For woeful wight, chose out a gloomy glade,
Where hardly eye might see bright heaven's face
For mossy trees, which cover'd all with shade
And sad melancholy; there he his cabin made.

His wonted warlike weapons all he broke
And threw away, with vow to use no more,
Nor thenceforth ever strike in battle stroke,
Nor ever word to speak to woman more;
But in that wilderness, of men forlore,⁵
And of the wicked world forgotten quite,
His hard mishap in dolour to deplore,
And waste his wretched days in woeful plight:
So on himself to wreak his folly's own despite.

And eke his garment, to be thereto meet,
He wilfully did cut and shape anew;
And his fair locks, that wont with ointment
sweet

To be embalm'd, and sweat out dainty dew,
He let to grow and grisly to concur,⁶
Uncomb'd, uncurl'd, and carelessly unshed;
That in short time his face they overgrew,
And over all his shoulders did dispread,
That who he whilom was unneth was to be read.⁷
There he continued in this careful⁸ plight,

¹ Distilled.

² Also.

³ Pierced.

⁴ In or shortly after the year 1592, Raleigh incurred the grave displeasure of Queen Elizabeth, by an amour which was discovered to exist between him and one of her maids of honour—Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Nicholas Throckmorton. Though he made reparation to the lady's honour by marrying her, still he was imprisoned for several months, and banished from the Queen's presence and Court. It is to this episode in

Wretchedly wearing out his youthly years,
Through wilful penury⁹ consum'd quite,
That like a pin'd ghost he soon appears:
For other food than that wild forest bears,
Nor other drink there did he ever taste
Than running water temper'd with his tears,
The more his weaken'd body so to waste:
That out of all men's knowledge he was worn
at last.

For on a day, by fortune as it fell,
His own dear lord Prince Arthur came that way,
Seeking adventures where he might hear tell;
And, as he through the wand'ring wood did
stray,
Having espied his cabin far away,
He to it drew, to weet¹⁰ who there did won;¹¹
Weening therein some holy hermit lay,
That did resort of sinful people shun;
Or else some woodman shrouded there from
scorching sun.

Arriving there, he found this wretched man
Spending his days in dolour and despair,
And, through long fasting, waxing pale and wan,
All overgrown with rude and rugged hair;
That albeit his own dear Squire he were,
Yet he him knew not, nor advis'd¹² at all;
But like strange wight, whom he had seen
nowhere,
Saluting him gan into speech to fall,
And pity much his plight, that liv'd like out-
cast thrall.

But to his speech he answer'd no whit,
But stood still mute as if he had been dumb,
Nor sign of sense did show, nor common wit,
As one with grief and anguish overcome;
And unto ev'rything did answer mum:
And ever, when the Prince unto him spake,
He louted¹³ lowly, as did him become,
And humble homage did unto him make;
Midst sorrow showing joyous semblance for his
sake.

At which his uncouth guise and usage quaint
The Prince did wonder much, yet could not
guess

The cause of that his sorrowful constraint;
Yet ween'd, by secret signs of manliness
Which close appear'd in that rude brutishness,
That he whilom some gentle swain had been,
Train'd up in feats of arms and knightliness;
Which he observ'd, by that he him had seen
To wield his naked sword, and try the edges
keen;

And eke by that he saw on ev'ry tree
How he the name of one engraven had
Which likely was his liefest¹⁴ love to be,
From whom he now so sorely was bestad;¹⁵
Which was by him BELPHOEBE rightly rad:¹⁶

the career of his friend Raleigh (whom, as it has been already stated, Timias represents) that Spenser refers in the not less bold than beautiful passage before us.

⁵ Abandoned.

⁶ Grow together.

⁷ That it was scarcely possible to tell who he formerly was.

⁸ Sorrowful.

⁹ Privation.

¹⁰ Learn.

¹¹ Dwell.

¹² Recognised.

¹³ Bowed.

¹⁴ Dearest.

¹⁵ Separated from whom he was so wretched. ¹⁶ Read.

Yet who was that Belphebe he not wist;¹
 Yet saw he often how he waxed glad
 When he it heard, and how the ground he kist
 Wherein it written was, and how himself he
 blist.²

Then when he long had mark'd his demeanour,
 And saw that all he said and did was vain,
 Nor aught might make him change his wonted
 tenour,

Nor aught might cease to mitigate his pain;
 He left him there in languor to remain,
 Till time for him should remedy provide,
 And him restore to former grace again:
 Which, for it is too long here to abide,
 I will defer the end until another tide.

CANTO VIII.

*The gentle Squire recovers grace:
 Slander her guests doth stain:
 Corflambo chaseth Placidus,
 And is by Arthur slain.*

THE poet cites the saying of Solomon, "that the displeasure of the mighty is than death itself more dread and desperate;" and points the proverb by the sad case of Timias, "whose tender heart the fair Belphebe had with one stern look so daunted," that his whole life was passed in sorrow and weeping, "as blasted bloom through heat doth languish and decay."

Till on a day, as in his wonted wise
 His dool³ he made, there chanc'd a turtle dove
 To come, where he his dolours did devise,⁴
 That likewise late had lost her dearest love,
 Which loss her made like passion⁵ also prove:⁶
 Who seeing his sad plight, her tender heart
 With dear compassion deeply did enmove,
 That she gan moan his undeserv'd smart,
 And with her doleful accent bear with him a
 part.

She sitting by him, as on ground he lay,
 Her mournful notes full piteously did frame,
 And thereof made a lamentable lay,
 So sensibly compil'd,⁷ that in the same
 Him seem'd oft he heard his own right name.
 With that he forth would pour so plenteous
 tears,
 And beat his breast, unworthy of such blame,
 And knock his head, and rend his rugged hairs,
 That could have pierc'd the hearts of tigers and
 of bears.

Thus long this gentle bird to him did use,
 Withouten dread of peril, to repair
 Unto his won,⁸ and with her mournful muse
 Him to recomfort in his greatest care,
 That much did ease his mourning and misfare:⁹
 And ev'ry day, for guerdon of her song,
 He part of his small feast to her would share;

That, at the last, of all his woe and wrong
 Companion she became, and so continued long.

Upon a day, as she him sat beside,
 By chance he certain monuments¹⁰ forth drew,
 Which yet with him as relics did abide
 Of all the bounty which Belphebe threw
 On him, whilst goodly grace¹¹ she did him shew:
 Amongst the rest a jewel rich he found,
 That was a ruby of right perfect hue,
 Shap'd like a heart yet bleeding of the wound,
 And with a little golden chain about it bound.

The same he took, and with a riband new,
 In which his lady's colours were, did bind
 About the turtle's neck, that with the view
 Did greatly solace his engriev'd mind.
 All unawares the bird, when she did find
 Herself so deck'd, her nimble wings display'd,
 And flew away as lightly as the wind:
 Which sudden accident him much dismay'd;
 And, looking after long, did mark which way
 she stray'd;

But when as long he look'd had in vain,
 Yet saw her forward still to make her flight,
 His weary eye return'd to him again,
 Full of discomfort and disquiet plight,
 That both his jewel he had lost so light,
 And eke his dear companion of his care.
 But that sweet bird departing flew forthright,
 Through the wide region of the wasteful¹¹ air,
 Until she came where wonn'd¹² his Belphebe
 fair.

There found she her (as then it did betide)
 Sitting in covert shade of arbours sweet,
 After late weary toil, which she had tried
 In salvage chase, to rest as seem'd her meet.
 There she, alighting, fell before her feet,
 And gan to her her mournful plaint to make,
 As was her wont, thinking to let her weet¹³
 The great tormenting grief that for her sake
 Her gentle Squire through her displeasure did
 partake.

She, her beholding with attentive eye,
 At length did mark about her purple breast
 That precious jewel which she formerly
 Had known right well, with colour'd ribands
 drest:

Therewith she rose in haste, and her addrest
 With ready hand it to have reft away:
 But the swift bird obey'd not her behest,
 But swerv'd aside, and there again did stay;
 She follow'd her, and thought again it to assay.
 And ever, when she nigh approach'd, the dove
 Would flit a little forward, and then stay
 Till she drew near, and then again remove:
 So tempting her still to pursue the prey,
 And still from her escaping soft away:
 Till that at length into that forest wide
 She drew her far, and led with slow delay:
 In th' end, she her unto that place did guide
 Where as that woeful man in languor did abide.

Eftsoons she flew unto his fearless hand,

1 Knew.

3 Lament.

5 Suffering.

2 Blessed.

4 Told his griefs.

6 Feel.

7 Constructed.

9 Unhappiness.

11 Desert.

8 Dwelling.

10 Memorials.

12 Dwelt.

13 Know.

And there a piteous ditty new devis'd,
 As if she would have made him understand
 His sorrow's cause, to be of her despis'd :
 Whom when she saw in wretched weeds¹ disguis'd,
 With hairy glib² deform'd, and meagre face,
 Like ghost late risen from his grave agris'd,³
 She knew him not, but pitied much his case,
 And wish'd it were in her to do him any grace.
 He, her beholding, at her feet down fell
 And kiss'd the ground on which her sole did tread,
 And wash'd the same with water which did well
 From his moist eyes, and like two streams proceed ;
 Yet spake no word, whereby she might aread⁴
 What mister wight⁵ he was, or what he meant ;
 But, as one daunted with her presence dread,
 Only few rueful looks unto her sent,
 As messengers of his true meaning and intent.

Belphebe does not understand his meaning, nor recognise his person ; but she sees that he has been "some man of place," and, moved with pity, inquires what makes him thus wretched ; calling on him not to despise the grace of his Creator, by wilful scorn of life. Breaking his long silence, Timias exclaims that Heaven has secretly consented with a cruel one, to cloud his days in doleful misery, and make him loathe both life and death :

"Nor any but yourself, O dearest Dread,⁶
 Hath done this wrong, to wreak on worthless wight
 Your high displeasure, through misdeeming⁷ bred :
 That, when your pleasure is to deem aright,
 Ye may redress, and me restore to light !"
 Which sorry words her mighty heart did mate⁸
 With mild regard to see his rueful plight,
 That her inburning wrath she gan abate,
 And him receiv'd again to former favour's state.
 In which he long time afterwards did lead
 A happy life with grace and good accord,
 Fearless of fortune's change or envy's dread,
 And eke all mindless of his own dear lord
 The noble Prince, who never heard one word
 Of tidings, what did unto him betide,
 Or what good fortune did to him afford ;
 But through the endless world did wander wide,
 Him seeking evermore, yet nowhere him descried.

"Till on a day, as through that wood he rode," he found Emilia and Amoret ; the first yet weak from the hardships of her imprisonment, the other suffering grievously from the wound inflicted by Timias in the contest with the carl. Moved with pity especially for Amoret, the Prince bathed her wound with a few drops

¹ Garments.

² In his "View of the State of Ireland," Spenser says that the Irish, among other customs derived from the Scythians, have that of wearing "long glibs, which is a thick curled bush of hair, hanging down over their eyes and monstrously disguising them."

³ Terrified, confounded.

⁴ Discover.

of that precious liquor⁹ which he always carried about him, and soon restored her to health. He marvelled much at the story of their rescue, and greatly desired to know who was the Virgin that had delivered them ; but since he could not learn, he set them on his horse, and walked beside on foot "to succour them from fear."

So when that forest they had pass'd well,
 A little cottage far away they spied,
 To which they drew ere night upon them fell ;
 And, ent'ring in, found none therein abide,
 But one old woman sitting there beside
 Upon the ground in ragged rude attire,
 With filthy locks about her scatter'd wide,
 Gnawing her nails for fellness and for ire,
 And thereoutsucking venom to her parts entire.¹⁰

A foul and loathly creature sure in sight,¹¹
 And in conditions¹² to be loath'd no less :
 For she was stuff'd with rancour and despite
 Up to the throat, that oft with bitterness
 It forth would break and gush in great excess,
 Pouring out streams of poison and of gall
 'Gainst all that truth or virtue do profess ;
 Whom she with leasings¹³ lewdly¹⁴ did miscall
 And wickedly backbite : her name men Slander call.

Her nature is, all goodness to abuse,
 And, causeless, crimes continually to frame,
 With which she guiltless persons may accuse,
 And steal away the crown of their good name :
 Nor ever knight so bold, nor ever dame
 So chaste and loyal liv'd, but she would strive
 With forg'd cause them falsely to defame ;
 Nor ever thing so well was done alive,
 But she with blame would blot, and of due praise deprive.

Her words were not, as common words are meant,
 To express the meaning of the inward mind,
 But noisome breath, and pois'nous spirit sent
 From inward parts, with canker'd malice lin'd,
 And breath'd forth with blast of bitter wind ;
 Which, passing through the ears, would pierce the heart,

And wound the soul itself with grief unkind :
 For, like the stings of asps that kill with smart,
 Her spiteful words did prick and wound the inner part.

Bowing to necessity, the Prince and his companions patiently endured the cold and cheerless hunger of the place, and the scoldings and railings of the hag "for lodging there without her own consent." Anticipating the objections of some "rash-witted wight," who might deem those gentle ladies too light "for thus conversing with this noble knight," the poet admits that "now of days such temperance is rare, and hard to find," as that which restrains heat of youthful spirit from greed of pleasure ; "more

⁵ Manner of man.

⁶ Object of reverent fear. See note 19, page 310.

⁷ Misjudgment.

⁸ Subdue.

⁹ Of which he had given a few drops to the Redcross Knight. See page 347.

¹⁰ Internal.

¹¹ Aspect.

¹² Qualities.

¹³ False speeches.

¹⁴ Wickedly.

hard for hungry steed t' abstain from pleasant lair."

But antique Age, yet in the infancy
Of time, did live then, like an innocent,
In simple truth and blameless chastity;
Nor then of guile had made experiment;
But, void of vile and treacherous intent,
Held virtue, for itself, in sov'reign awe:
Then loyal love had royal regiment,¹
And each unto his lust² did make a law,
From all forbidden things his liking to withdraw.

The lion there did with the lamb consort,
And eke the dove sat by the falcon's side;
Nor each of other feared fraud or tort,³
But did in safe security abide,
Withouten peril of the stronger pride:
But when the world wax'd old, it wax'd warre⁴
old

(Whereof it hight⁵), and, having shortly tried
The trains⁶ of wit, in wickedness wax'd bold,
And dar'd of all sins the secrets to unfold.

Then Beauty, which was made to represent
The great Creator's own resemblance bright,
Unto abuse of lawless lust was lent,
And made the bait of bestial delight:
Then fair grew foul, and foul grew fair in sight;
And that which went to vanquish God and
man

Was made the vassal of the victor's might;
Then did her glorious flow'r wax dead and wan,
Despis'd and trodden down of all that overran:

And now it is so utterly decay'd,
That any bud thereof doth scarce remain,
But if⁷ few plants, preserv'd through heav'nly
aid,

In prince's court do hap to sprout again,
Dew'd with her drops of bounty sov'reign,
Which from that goodly glorious flow'r⁸ pro-
ceed,

Sprung of the ancient stock of princes' strain,⁹
Now th' only remnant of that royal breed
Whose noble kind at first was, sure, of heav'nly
seed.

Soon as day dawned, the gentle crew continued
their journey, in the same way as before; the
"shameful hag, the slander of her sex," pur-
suing them with foul revilings, railing and
raging, till she had spent all her poison.

At last, when they were pass'd out of sight,
Yet she did not her spiteful speech forbear,
But after them did bark, and still backbite,
Though there were none her hateful words to
hear:

Like as a cur doth felly bite and tear
The stone which pass'd stranger at him threw;
So she, them seeing past the reach of ear,
Against the stones and trees did rail anew,
Till she had dull'd the sting which in her
tongue's end grew.

¹ Government, rule.

² Will. ³ Wrong.

⁴ Whence it takes its name.

⁵ Stratagems.

⁶ Gloriana, or Queen Elizabeth.

⁷ Race.

⁸ Worse.

⁹ Unless.

Passing gently on their way, because of the
great feebleness of Amoret, and the heavy
armour which annoyed the Prince on foot, they
spied at last, galloping towards them, a squire
bearing before him on his steed a little dwarf
who all the way cried for aid, "that seem'd his
shrieks would rend the brazen sky." After
them pursued, riding on a dromedary, a mighty
man "of stature huge, and horrible of hue,"
from whose fearful eyes two fiery beams, sharper
than points of needles, proceeded, powerful to
kill as glances of the basilisk. He threw many
angry curses and threats at the squire, who;
when he saw the Prince, called aloud to him for
rescue. Arthur, causing the ladies to alight,
mounted his steed; and just as the pursuer
aimed a dreadful blow at the squire, the Prince
interposed:

Who, thrusting boldly 'twixt him and the blow,
The burden of the deadly brunt did bear
Upon his shield, which lightly he did throw
Over his head, before the harm came near:
Nathless it fell with so despiteous drear¹⁰
And heavy sway, that hard unto his crown
The shield it drove, and did the covering rear:¹¹
Therewith both squire and dwarf did tumble
down
Unto the earth, and lay long while in senseless
swoon.

Whereat the Prince, full wroth, his strong right
hand

In full avengement heav'd up on high,
And struck the Pagan with his steely brand
So sore, that to his saddle-bow thereby
He bow'd low, and so a while did lie:
And, sure, had not his massy iron mace
Betwixt him and his hurt been happily,
It would have cleft him to the girding place;¹²
Yet, as it was, it did astonish¹³ him long space.

But, when he to himself return'd again,
All full of rage he gan to curse and swear,
And vow by Mahound¹⁴ that he should be slain.
With that his murd'rous mace he up did rear,
That seem'd naught the souse¹⁵ thereof could
bear,

And therewith smote at him with all his might:
But, ere that it to him approach'd near,
The royal Child,¹⁶ with ready quick foresight,
Did shun the proof thereof, and it avoided light.

But, ere his hand he could recure¹⁷ again
To ward his body from the baleful stound,¹⁸
He smote at him with all his might and main
So furiously, that, ere he wist, he found
His head before him tumbling on the ground;
The while his babbling tongue did yet blaspheme
And curse his god that did him so confound;
The while his life ran forth in bloody stream,
His soul descended down into the Stygian ream.¹⁹

Glad was the squire, and bitterly sorry the

¹⁰ Terror.

¹¹ Removed the cover—which veiled the blinding
brightness of the shield.

¹² To the belt, or waist.

¹³ Stun.

¹⁴ Manomet.

¹⁵ Forcible descent.

¹⁶ Youth.

¹⁷ Recover.

¹⁸ Blow.

¹⁹ Realm.

dwarf, to see the giant's fall; and Arthur began to inquire of the first what he was whose eyes did flame with fire. The squire replied that the mighty man whom the Prince had slain was bred of a huge giantess, and had won to himself command of many kingdoms, not by armies nor by bloody fight, "but by the power of his infectious sight," which killed whoever saw him. Never had he been vanquished, for no man could match him; while no woman was so fair that he did not make her captive to his thought, and waste her unto naught, by casting secret flakes of lustful fire into her heart from his false eyes. "Therefore Corflambo¹ was he call'd aright;" and he had left one daughter, Pæana, outwardly as fair as living eye had ever seen, but inwardly given to vain delight, "and eke too loose of life, and eke of love too light." As it fell, a gentle squire loved a lady of high parentage—Æmilia—who had resolved to fly with him; but as he went to the trysting-place, he was caught by Corflambo, and thrown into his dungeon, where he remained "of all unsuccoured and unsought." The giant's daughter, coming "in her joyous glee" to gaze on the captives, fell in love with "the squire of low degree," whose name was Amyas, and promised him liberty for his love; "he granted love, but with affection cold, to win her grace his liberty to get;" still she detained him a captive, fearing that, if freed, he would quit her. Yet sometimes he had the favour of walking about her pleasure-garden, with the dwarf as his keeper, who held the keys of every prison door. The squire whom Arthur had rescued, and who was called Placidus, for zealous love of the prisoner went to search the place of his captivity; there he was discovered by the dwarf, who, deceived by his strong resemblance to Amyas, told his mistress that her squire of low degree secretly stole out of his prison; and, being taken and brought before Pæana, Placidus was reproached for his untruth and desire to escape, and driven away by the dwarf to the dungeon where his faithful friend languished "in heavy plight and sad perplexity." The captive, however, was only the more grieved by the captivity of his friend; for his sole joy in his distress was the freedom of his Placidus and his Æmilia. But the new prisoner insisted upon the other's consent to a scheme for deliverance, through taking advantage of the resemblance between the two.

"The morrow next, about the wonted hour,
The dwarf call'd at the door of Amyas
To come forthwith unto his lady's bow'r:
Instead of whom forth came I, Placidus,
And undiscern'd forth with him did pass.
There with great joyance and with gladsome glee
Of fair Pæana I receiv'd was,
And oft embrac'd, as if that I were he,
And with kind words acoy'd,² vowing great
love to me.

¹ The Inflamer of Hearts.

² Coarced, enticed.

⁴ Unless. ⁵ Acquisition.

³ Indifference.

⁶ Close embrace.

"Which I, that was not bent to former love,
As was my friend that had her long refus'd,
Did well accept, as well it did behove,
And to the present need it wisely us'd.
My former hardness³ first I fair excus'd;
And, after, promis'd large amends to make.
With such smooth terms her error I abus'd,
To my friend's good more than for mine own
sake,

For whose sole liberty I love and life did stake.

"Thenceforth I found more favour at her hand;
That to her dwarf, which had me in his charge,
She bade to lighten my too heavy band,
And grant more scope to me to walk at large.
So on a day, as by the flow'ry marge
Of a fresh stream I with that elf did play,
Finding no means how I might us enlarge,
But if⁴ that dwarf I could with me convey,
I lightly snatch'd him up, and with me bore
away.

"Thereat he shriek'd aloud, that with his cry
The tyrant self came forth with yelling bray,
And me pursued; but nathemore would I
Forego the purchase⁵ of my gotten prey,
But have perforce him hither brought away."
Thus as they talk'd, lo! where nigh at hand
Those ladies two, yet doubtful through dismay,
In presence came, desirous t' understand
Tidings of all which there had happen'd on the
land.

Where soon as sad Æmilia did espy
Her captive lover's friend, young Placidus;
All mindless of her wonted modesty
She to him ran, and, him with strait embras⁶
Enfolding, said; "And lives yet Amyas?"
"He lives," quoth he, "and his Æmilia loves."
"Then less," said she, "by all the woe I pass,⁷
With which my weaker patience Fortune proves:
But what mishap thus long him from myself
removes?"

Then gan he all this story to renew,
And tell the course of his captivity;
That her dear⁸ heart full deeply made to rue⁹
And sigh full sore to hear the misery
In which so long he merciless did lie.
Then, after many tears and sorrows spent,
She dear besought the Prince of remedy:
Who thereto did with ready will consent,
And well perform'd; as shall appear by his
event.

CANTO IX.

*The squire of low degree, releas'd,
Pæana takes to wife:
Britomart fights with many knights;
Prince Arthur stints¹⁰ their strife.*

HARD is the doubt, and difficult to deem,¹¹
When all three kinds of love together meet
And do dispart¹² the heart with pow'r extreme,

⁷ Less do I consider all the woe.

⁸ Loving.

¹⁰ Stops.

¹¹ Decide, judge.

⁹ Pity.

¹² Divide.

Whether shall weigh the balance down ; to weest,
The dear affection unto kindred sweet,
Or raging fire of love to womankind,
Or zeal of friends combin'd with virtues meet.
But of them all the band of virtuous mind,
Me seems, the gentle heart should most assur'd
bind.

For natural affection soon doth cease,
And quenched is with Cupid's greater flame ;
But faithful friendship doth them both suppress,
And them with mast'ring discipline doth tame,
Through thoughts aspiring to eternal fame.
For as the soul doth rule the earthly mass,
And all the service of the body frame,
So love of soul doth love of body pass,
No less than perfect gold surmounts the meanest
brass.

All which who list by trial to assay,¹
Shall in this story find approv'd plain ;
In which these squires true friendship more
did sway

Than either care of parents could refrain,
Or love of fairest lady could constrain.
For though Pæana were as fair as morn,
Yet did this trusty squire with proud disdain,
For his friend's sake, her offer'd favours scorn ;
And she herself her sire of whom she was y-born.

Considering how he might best achieve the
enterprise of succouring Amyas, Arthur resolved
to set the body of Corflambo, "having imp'd
the head to it again," upon the dromedary ;
before the dead but live-seeming giant he laid
Placidas, as if he were a captive ; and he made
the dwarf lead the beast to the castle—where
the watch unsuspectingly admitted the corpse
and the Prince together.

There did he find, in her delicious bow'r,
The fair Pæana playing on a rote,²
Complaining of her cruel paramour,
And singing all her sorrow to the note,
As she had learn'd readily by rote ;
That with the sweetness of her rare delight
The Prince half rapt began on her to dote ;
Till, better him bethinking of the right,
He her unwares attach'd,³ and captive held by
might.

Pæana called, but vainly, on her father for
aid ; then, seeing that she had been betrayed,
she began to weep, and wail, and charge the
squire with treason. But Arthur, unheeding,
made the dwarf open the prison doors ; and
above a score of knights and ladies were released
—among them, full weak and wan, the squire
of low degree. Placidas and Æmilia ran to
embrace him ; while Pæana, gnawed with envy,
cursed them both, and wept bitterly. By and
by, however, she began to doubt which of the
two squires was the man with whom she had
been in love—so like were they in person ; and
her doubt and wonder were shared by the Prince
and all present. Ransacking the castle, the

Prince found much ill-gotten treasure, on which
he seized ; he rested some time there to recruit
the weaker ladies after their weary toil ; and
he liberated Pæana—who, however, would not
"show gladsome countenance nor pleasant glee,"
for grief at the loss of her father, her lordship,
and "her new love, the hope of her desire."
By degrees, Arthur softened away the foul rude-
ness of the lady ; while he counselled Placidas
to "accept her to his wedded wife"—offering to
"make him chief of all her land and lordship
during life." Placidas consented, and all went
happily.

From that day forth in peace and joyous bliss
They liv'd together long without debate ;
Nor private jar, nor spite of enemies,
Could shake the safe assurance of their state :
And she, whom nature did so fair create
That she might match the fairest of her days,
Yet with lewd loves and lust intemperate
Had it defac'd, thenceforth reform'd her ways,
That all men much admir'd her change, and
spake her praise.

Having settled Amyas and Æmilia, Placidas
and Pæana, in peace and rest, Arthur set out
on his former quest (after the Faery Queen),
taking with him Amoret, now fearless for her
safety, but fearful of her honour—though cause
of fear she had none, for while she rode by the
self-controlling Arthur, "she was as safe as in
a sanctuary."

At length they came where as a troop of knights
They saw together skirmishing, as seem'd :
Six they were all, all full of fell despite,
But four of them the battle best besem'd,⁴
That which of them was best might not be
deem'd.

These four were they from whom false Florimell
By Braggadocio lately was redeem'd ;⁵
To wit, stern Druon, and lewd Claribell,
Love-lavish Blandamour, and lustful Paridell.

Druon's delight was all in single life,
And unto ladies' love would lend no leisure :
The more was Claribell engag'd rife⁶
With fervent flames, and lov'd out of measure :
So eke lov'd Blandamour, but yet at pleasure
Would change his liking, and new lemans⁷
prove :

But Paridell of love did make no treasure,⁸
But lusted after all that him did move :
So diversely these four dispos'd were to love.
But those two others, which beside them stood,
Were Britomart and gentle Scudamour ;
Who all the while beheld their wrathful mood,
And wonder'd at their implacable stowre,⁹
Whose like they never saw till that same hour :
So dreadful strokes each did at other drive,
And laid on load with all their might and pow'r,
As if that ev'ry dint the ghost would rive
Out of their wretched corpses, and their lives
deprive.

¹ Who chooses to test by experiment.

² See note 14, page 395.

³ Seized.

⁴ Seemed fit for.

⁵ At the tournament of Satyrane. See canto v. of
the present book.

⁷ Mistresses.

⁸ Hold no account.

⁶ Frequently.

⁹ Conflict.

As when Dan Æolus, in great displeasure
For loss of his dear love by Neptune hent,¹
Sends forth the winds out of his hidden trea-
sure,²

Upon the sea to wreak his full intent;
They, breaking forth with rude unruliment
From all four parts of heav'n, do rage full sore,
And toss the deeps, and tear the firmament,
And all the world confound with wide uproar;
As if instead thereof they Chaos would restore.

It may be remembered that, after Sir Satyrane's tournament (in canto iv. of this book) the "discordful crew" with whom Duessa and Até travelled, had set out in quest of "the snowy maid," the false Florimell; and now they had all met, and were fighting confusedly, provoked "through lewd upbraid" of the two strife-ful dames in their company. Ever changing sides and opponents, they continued the battle with ever new fury; proving the truth of the saying, that "faint friends when they fall out most cruel foemen be." While they fought, Scudamour and Britomart had come in sight, inspiring them all with new rancour—for the Maid had put them all to shame in the late tourney. All now turned their cruel blades from themselves, against the new comers, who bore themselves bravely, and repaid the assailants their own with usury.

Full oftentimes did Britomart assay
To speak to them, and some emparlance³ move;
But they for naught their cruel hands would
stay,

Nor lend an ear to aught that might behove.
As when an eager mastiff once doth prove
The taste of blood of some engor'd⁴ beast,
No words may rate,⁵ nor rigour him remove
From greedy hold of that his bloody feast:
So, little did they hearken to her sweet behest.

Whom when the Briton Prince afar beheld
With odds of so unequal match opprest,
His mighty heart with indignation swell'd,
And inward grudge fill'd his heroic breast:
Eftsoons himself he to their aid addrest,
And, thrusting fierce into the thickest press,
Divided them, however loth to rest;
And would them fain from battle to surcease,
With gentle words persuading them to friendly
peace:

But they so far from peace or patience were,
That all at once at him gan fiercely fly,
And lay on load, as they him down would bear:
Like to a storm which hovers under sky,
Long here and there and round about doth sty,⁶
At length breaks down in rain, and hail, and
sleet,
First from one coast, till naught thereof be dry;

¹ Neptune was said to have carried off Arne, one of the daughters of Æolus.

³ Parley, treaty for peace.

⁵ Chide off.

² Storehouse.

⁴ Wounded.

⁶ Move.

And then another, till that likewise fleet;⁷
And so from side to side till all the world it
weet.⁸

At last, on the intercession of Scudamour and Britomart, the Prince granted a truce, and asked the combatants to tell the cause of their cruel heat. They began to repeat all that had passed, telling how Britomart had foiled them in open tourney, and beguiled them of their love. Britomart, in a passage not quite reconcileable with what goes before, defended herself from the charge, showing that she had not carried Amoret away by force, but of her own liking.

To whom the Prince thus goodly well replied;
"Certes, Sir Knights, ye seemen much to blame
To rip up wrong that battle once hath tried;
Wherein the honour both of arms ye shame,
And eke the love of ladies foul defame;
To whom the world this franchise⁹ ever yielded,
That of their loves' choice they might freedom
claim,

And in that right should by all knights be
shielded:

'Gainst which, me seems, this war ye wrongfully
have wielded."

"And yet," quoth she, "a greater wrong re-
mains:

For I thereby my former love have lost;
Whom seeking ever since with endless pains
Hath me much sorrow and much travail cost:
Ah me, to see that gentle maid so tost!"
But Scudamour then sighing deep thus said;
"Certes her loss ought me to sorrow most,
Whose right she is, wherever she be stray'd,
Through many perils won, and many fortunes
weigh'd:¹⁰

"For from the first that I her love profess,
Unto this hour, this present luckless hour,
I never joy'd happiness nor rest:
But thus turmoil'd from one to other stowre¹¹
I waste my life, and do my days devour
In wretched anguish and incessant woe,
Passing the measure of my feeble pow'r;
That, living thus a wretch and loving so,
I neither can my love nor yet my life forego."

Then good Sir Claribell him thus bespake;
"Now were it not, Sir Scudamour, to you
Dislikeful¹² pain so sad a task take,
Might we entreat you, since this crew
Is now so well accorded all anew,
That, as we ride together on our way,
Ye will recount to us in order due
All that adventure which ye did assay."¹³
For that fair lady's love: past perils well.

All the rest, especially Britomart, in
same request; and, glad to satisfy the
Scudamour spoke as the next canto repor

⁷ Fleet.

⁹ Privilege, liberty.

¹¹ Conflict, trouble.

¹³ The recollection of perils past is well pleasing

⁸ Wet.

¹⁰ Endured.

¹² Disagreeable

CANTO X.

*Scudamour doth his conquest tell
Of virtuous Amoret:
Great Venus' Temple is describ'd;
And lovers' life forth set.*

"TRUE he it said, whatever man it said,
That love with gall and honey doth abound:¹
But if the one be with the other weigh'd,
For every dram of honey therein found
A pound of gall doth over it redound;
That I too true by trial have approv'd;
For since the day that first with deadly wound
My heart was lanc'd, and learn'd to have lov'd,
I never joy'd hour, but still with care was mov'd.

"And yet such grace is giv'n them from above,
That all the cares and evil which they meet
May naught at all their settled minds remove,
But seem, 'gainst common sense, to them most
sweet;

As boasting in their martyrdom unmeet.
So all that ever yet I have endur'd
I count as naught, and tread down under feet,
Since of my love at length I rest assur'd
That to disloyalty she will not be allur'd.

"Long were to tell the travail and long toil
Through which the Shield of Love I late have
won,

And purchas'd this peerless beauty's spoil;
That harder may be ended than begun:
But since ye so desire, your will be done.
Then hark, ye gentle knights and ladies free,
My hard mishaps that ye may learn to shun;
For though sweet love to conquer glorious be,
Yet is the pain thereof much greater than the
fee.

"What time the fame of this renown'd prize
Flew first abroad, and all men's ears possess;
I, having arms then taken, gan advise²
To win me honour by some noble gest,³
And purchase me some place amongst the best.
I boldly thought (so young men's thoughts are
bold),

That this same brave emprise for me did rest,
And that both shield and she whom I behold
Might be my lucky lot; since all by lot we hold.

"So on that hard adventure forth I went,
And to the place of peril shortly came:
That was a temple fair and ancient,
Which of great mother Venus bare the name,
And far renown'd through exceeding fame;
Much more than that which was in Paphos built,
That in Cyprus,⁴ both long since⁵ this same,
Though all the pillars of the one were gilt,
All the other's pavement were with ivory
spilt.⁶

"And it was seated in an island strong,
Abounding all with delights⁷ most rare,
And wall'd by nature 'gainst invaders' wrong,
That none might have access, nor inward fare,⁸
But by one way that passage did prepare.
It was a bridge y-built in goodly wise
With curious corbs⁹ and pendants graven fair,
And arch'd all with porches did arise
On stately pillars fram'd after the Doric guise:

"And for defence thereof on th' other end
There rear'd was a castle fair and strong,
That ward'd all which in or out did wend,
And flank'd both the bridge's sides along
'Gainst all that would it fain¹⁰ to force or wrong:
And therein woun'd¹¹ twenty valiant knights;
All twenty tried in war's experience long;
Whose office was against all manner wights¹²
By all means to maintain that castle's ancient
rights.

"Before that castle was an open plain,
And in the midst thereof a pillar plac'd;
On which this shield, of many sought in vain,
THE SHIELD OF LOVE, whose guerdon me hath
grac'd,
Was hang'd on high, with golden ribands lac'd;
And in the marble stone was written this,
With golden letters goodly well enchas'd;
*Bless'd the man that well can use this bliss:
Whose ever be the shield, fair Amoret be his.*

"Which when I read, my heart did inly yearn,
And pant with hope of that adventure's hap:
Nor stay'd further news thereof to learn,
But with my spear upon the shield did rap,
That all the castle ring'd with the clap.
Straight forth issued a knight all arm'd to proof,
And bravely mounted to his most mishap:
Who, staying not to question from aloof,
Ran fierce at me; that fire glanc'd from his
horse's hoof.

"Whom boldly I encounter'd (as I co'd),
And by good fortune shortly him unseated.
Eftsoons outsprang two more of equal mould;
But I them both with equal hap defeated:
So all the twenty I likewise entreated,
And left them groaning there upon the plain.
Then, pressing to the pillar, I repeated
The read¹³ thereof for guerdon of my pain,
And, taking down the shield, with me did it
retain.

"So forth without impediment I past,
Till to the bridge's outer gate I came;
The which I found sure lock'd and chain'd fast.
I knock'd, but no man answer'd me by name;
I call'd, but no man answer'd to my claim;¹⁴
Yet I persever'd still to knock and call;
Till at the last I spied within the same
Where one stood peeping through a crevice small,
To whom I call'd aloud, half angry therewithal.

of Venus stood at Paphos, a town on the west coast of
the island of Cyprus.

⁶ Inlaid.

⁷ Delights.

⁸ Desire.

⁹ persons.

¹⁰ Motto, inscription
literal meaning of "claim," from I

¹¹ After.

¹² Pass, go.

¹³ Dwell.

¹⁴ Motto, inscription

¹ Wet.

² Endured.

³ Disagreeable.

⁴ are to deceive, and spin, and weep, and sugar

⁵ in gall;" page 205.

⁶ think myself.

⁷ achievement.

⁸ as two were really the same; the fam

⁹ past is well pleasing

¹⁰ ext canto repor

¹¹ Britomart, m

¹² to satisfy the

¹³ past is well pleasing

¹⁴ ext canto repor

"That was, to wit, the porter of the place,
Unto whose trust the charge thereof was lent:¹
His name was Doubt, that had a double face,
Th' one forward looking, th' other backward
bent,

Therein resembling Janus ancient
Which hath in charge the ingate² of the year:
And evermore his eyes about him went,
As if some proved peril he did fear,
Or did misdoubt some ill whose cause did not
appear.

"On th' one side he, on th' other sat Delay,
Behind the gate, that none her might espy;
Whose manner was, all passengers to stay
And entertain with her occasions aly;³
Through which some lost great hope unheedily,
Which never they recover might again;
And others, quite excluded forth, did lie
Long languishing there in unpitied pain,
And seeking often entrance afterwards in vain.

"Me when as he⁴ had privily espied
Bearing the shield which I had conquer'd late,
He kenn'd⁵ it straight, and to me open'd wide:
So in I pass'd, and straight he clos'd the gate.
But being in, Delay in close await
Caught hold on me, and thought my steps to stay,
Feigning full many a fond⁶ excuse to prate,
And time to steal, the treasure of man's day,
Whose smallest minute lost no riches render⁷
may.

"But by no means my way I would forslow⁸
For aught that ever she could do or say;
But, from my lofty steed dismounting low,
Pass'd forth on foot, beholding all the way
The goodly works, and stones of rich assay,
Cast into sundry shapes by wondrous skill,
That like on earth nowhere I reckon may;
And, underneath, the river rolling still
With murmur soft, that seem'd to serve the
workman's will.

"Thence forth I pass'd to the second gate,
The Gate of Good Desert, whose goodly pride
And costly frame were long here to relate:
The same to all stood always open wide;
But in the porch did evermore abide
A hideous giant, dreadful to behold,
That stopp'd the entrance with his spacious
stride,
And with the terror of his count'nance bold
Full many did affray, that else fain enter wo'ld:

"His name was Danger, dreaded over all;
Who day and night did watch and duly ward
From fearful cowards entrance to forestall⁹
And faint-heart fools, whom show of peril hard
Could terrify from fortune's fair award:
For oftentimes faint hearts, at first espial
Of his grim face, were from approaching scar'd:
Unworthy they of grace, whom one denial
Excludes from fairest hope withouten farther
trial.

¹ Given.³ Plausible pretexts.⁵ Knew.⁸ Delay, retard, my progress.² Entrance, beginning.⁴ The porter, Doubt.⁷ Restore.⁹ Prevent.

"Yet many doughty warriors, often tried
In greater perils to be stout and bold,
Durst not the sternness of his look abide;
But, soon as they his count'nance did behold,
Began to faint, and feel their courage cold.
Again, some other, that in hard assays
Were cowards known, and little count did hold,¹⁰
Either through gifts, or guile, or such like ways,
Crept in by stooping low, or stealing of the keys.

"But I, though meanest man of many mo',
Yet much disdain'd unto him to lout,¹¹
Or creep between his legs, so in to go,
Resolv'd him to assault with manhood stout,
And either beat him in, or drive him out.
Eftsoons, advancing that enchanted shield,
With all my might I gan to lay about:
Which when he saw, the glaive¹² which he did
wield
He gan forthwith t' avale,¹³ and way unto me
yield.

"So as I enter'd, I did backward look,
For fear of harm that might lie hidden there;
And lo! his hind-parts, whereof heed I took,
Much more deform'd, fearful, ugly were,
Than all his former parts did erst¹⁴ appear:
For Hatred, Murder, Treason, and Despite,
With many more, lay in ambushment there,
Awaiting to entrap the wareless¹⁵ wight
Which did not them prevent with vigilant fore-
sight.

"Thus having pass'd all peril, I was come
Within the compass of that island's space;
The which did seem, unto my simple doom,¹⁶
The only pleasant and delightful place
That ever trodden was of footing's trace:
For all that Nature by her mother wit
Could frame in earth, and form of substance
base,

Was there; and all that Nature did omit,
Art, playing second Nature's part, suppli'd it.

"No tree, that is of count, in greenwood grows,
From lowest juniper to cedar tall;
No flow'r in field, that dainty odour throws,
And decks his branch with blossoms over all,
But there was planted, or grew natural:
Nor sense of man so coy and curious nice,
But there might find to please itself withal;
Nor heart could wish for any quaint device,
But there it present was, and did frail sense
entice.

"In such luxurious plenty of all pleasure,
It seem'd a second Paradise, I guess,
So lavishly enrich'd with Nature's treasure,
That if the happy souls which do possess
Th' Elysian fields, and live in lasting bliss,
Should happen this with living eye to see,
They soon would loathe their lesser happiness,
And wish to life return'd again to be,
That in this joyous place they might have joy-
ance free.

¹⁰ Were held in small esteem.¹² Sword.¹⁴ Formerly.¹⁶ Judgment.¹¹ Stoop.¹³ Lower.¹⁵ Unwary.

"Fresh shadows, fit to shroud from sunny ray;
Fair lawns, to take the sun in season due;
Sweet springs, in which a thousand nymphs did
play;

Soft-rumbling brooks, that gentle slumber drew;
High-rear'd mounts, the lands about to view;
Low-looking dales, disjoin'd¹ from common
gaze;

Delightful bow'rs, to solace lovers true;
False labyrinths, fond runners' eyes to daze;
All which, by Nature made, did Nature's self
amaze.

"And all without were walks and alleys dight²
With divers trees enrang'd in even ranks;
And here and there were pleasant arbours pight,³
And shady seats, and sundry flow'ring banks,
To sit and rest the walkers' weary shanks:
And therein thousand pairs of lovers walk'd,
Praising their god, and yielding him great thanks,
Nor ever aught but of their true loves talk'd,
Nor ever for rebuke or blame of any balk'd.⁴

"All these together by themselves did sport
Their spotless pleasures and sweet love's content;
But, far away from these, another sort
Of lovers link'd in true hearts' consent;
Which lov'd not as these for like intent,
But on chaste virtue grounded their desire,
Far from all fraud or feign'd blandishment;
Which, in their spirits kindling zealous fire,
Brave thoughts and noble deeds did evermore
aspire.⁵

"Such were great Hercules, and Hylas dear;
True Jonathan, and David trusty tried;
Stout Theseus, and Pirithöus his fere;⁶
Pylades, and Orestes by his side;
Mild Titus, and Gesippus without pride;
Damon and Pythias, whom death could not
sever:

All these, and all that ever had been tied
In bands of friendship, there did live for ever;
Whose lives although decay'd, yet loves decay'd
never.

"Which when as I, that never tasted bliss
Nor happy hour, beheld with gazeful eye,
I thought there was none other heav'n than this;
And gan their endless happiness env'y,
That, being free from fear and jealousy,
Might frankly there their love's desire possess;
Whilst I, through pains and perilous jeopardy,
Was forc'd to seek my life's dear patroness:
Much dearer be the things which come through
hard distress.

"Yet all those sights, and all that else I saw,
Might not my steps withhold, but that forthright
Unto that purpos'd place I did me draw,
Where as my love was lodg'd day and night,—
The temple of great Venus, that is hight
The queen of Beauty, and of Love the mother,
There worshipp'd of ev'ry living wight;

Whose goodly workmanship far pass'd all other
That ever were on earth, all⁷ were they set
together.

"Not that same famous temple of Diane,
Whose height all Ephesus did oversee,
And which all Asia sought with vows profane,
One of the world's Sev'n Wonders said to be,
Might match with this by many a degree.
Nor that, which that wise King of Jewry⁸
fram'd

With endless cost to be th' Almighty's see;⁹
Nor all that else through all the world is nam'd
To all the heathen gods, might like to this be
claim'd.

"I, much admiring that so goodly frame,
Unto the porch approach'd, which open stood;
But therein sat an amiable Dame,
That seem'd to be of very sober mood,
And in her semblant¹⁰ show'd great womanhood:
Strange was her tire;¹¹ for on her head a crown
She wore, much like unto a Danish hood,
Powder'd with pearl and stone; and all her gown
Enwoven was with gold, that raught¹² full low
adown.

"On either side of her two young men stood,
Both strongly arm'd, as fearing one another;
Yet were they brethren both of half the blood,
Begotten by two fathers of one mother,
Though of contrary natures each to other:
The one of them hight Love, the other Hate;
Hate was the elder, Love the younger brother;
Yet was the younger stronger in his state
Than th' elder, and him master'd still in all de-
bate.

"Nathless that Dame so well them temper'd
both,
That she them forc'd hand to join in hand,
All be⁷ that Hatred was thereto full loth,
And turn'd his face away, as he did stand,
Unwilling to behold that lovely band:
Yet she was of such grace and virtuous might,
That her commandment he could not withstand,
But bit his lip, for felonous despite,
And gnash'd his iron tusks at that displeasing
sight.

"Concord she call'd was in common read,¹³
Mother of blessed Peace and Friendship true;
They both her twins, both born of heav'nly
seed,
And she herself likewise divinely grew;
The which right well her works divine did shew:
For strength and wealth and happiness she lends,
And strife and war and anger does subdue;
Of little much, of foes she maketh friends,
And to afflicted minds sweet rest and quiet sends.

"By her the heav'n is in his course contain'd,
And all the world in state unmov'd stands,
As their Almighty Maker first ordain'd,
And bound them with inviolable bands;

¹ Far removed.

² Prepared, constructed.

⁴ Turned aside.

⁶ Companion.

³ Placed, pitched.

⁵ Aspire towards.

⁷ Although.

⁸ Solomon.

¹⁰ Air, aspect.

¹² Reached.

¹³ Discourse, speech.

⁹ Seat, habitation.

¹¹ Attire.

Else would the waters overflow the lands,
And fire devour the air, and hele¹ them quite;
But that she holds them with her blessed hands.
She is the nurse of pleasure and delight,
And unto Venus' grace the gate doth open right.

"By her I ent'ring half dismay'd was;
But she in gentle wise me entertain'd,
And 'twixt herself and Love did let me pass;
But Hatred would my entrance have restrain'd,
And with his club me threaten'd to have brain'd,
Had not the Lady with her pow'rful speech
Him from his wicked will unneth² refrain'd;
And th' other eke his malice did impeach,³
Till I was throughly past the peril of his reach.

"Into the inmost temple thus I came,
Which fuming all with frankincense I found,
And odours rising from the altars' flame.
Upon a hundred marble pillars round
The roof up high was rear'd from the ground,
All deck'd with crowns, and chains, and gar-
lands gay,
And thousand precious gifts worth many a pound,
The which sad lovers for their vows did pay;
And all the ground was strow'd with flowers as
fresh as May.

"A hundred altars round about were set,
All flaming with their sacrifices' fire,
That with the steam thereof the temple sweat,
Which, roll'd in clouds, to heaven did aspire,
And in them bore true lovers' vows entire:
And eke a hundred brazen caldrons bright,
To bathe in joy and amorous desire,
Ev'ry of which was to a damsel hight;⁴
For all the priests were damsels in soft linen
dight.⁵

"Right in the midst the goddess' self did stand,
Upon an altar of some costly mass,
Whose substance was unneth⁶ to understand:
For neither precious stone, nor dureful⁷ brass,
Nor shining gold, nor mould'ring clay it was;
But much more rare and precious to esteem,
Pure in aspect, and like to crystal glass;
Yet glass was not, if one did rightly deem;
But, being fair and brittle, likest glass did seem.

"But it in shape and beauty did excel
All other idols which the heath'n adore,
Far passing that which by surpassing skill
Phidias did make in Paphos isle of yore,
With which that wretched Greek, that life for-
lore,⁸

Did fall in love: yet this much fairer shin'd,
But cover'd with a slender veil afore;
And both her feet and legs together twin'd
Were with a snake, whose head and tail were
fast combin'd.⁹

"The cause why she was cover'd with a veil
Was hard to know, for that her priests the same
From people's knowledge labour'd to conceal:

¹ Conceal, cover.

² With difficulty.

³ Hindered.

⁴ Intrusted.

⁵ Dressed.

⁶ Difficult.

⁷ Enduring.

⁸ Forsook, lost.

⁹ Firmly united.

¹⁰ Sexes.

¹¹ Sports.

¹² Troops.

But sooth it was not sure for womanish shame,
Nor any blemish which the work might blame;
But for (they say) she hath both kinds¹⁰ in one,
Both male and female, both under one name:
She sire and mother is herself alone,
Begets and eke conceives, nor needeth other
none.

"And all about her neck and shoulders flew
A flock of little Loves, and Sports, and Joys,
With nimble wings of gold and purple hue;
Whose shapes seem'd not like to terrestrial boys,
But like to angels playing heav'nly toys¹¹
The whilst their eldest brother was away;—
Cupid, their eldest brother: he enjoys
The wide kingdom of Love with lordly sway,
And to his law compels all creatures to obey.

"And all about her altar scatter'd lay
Great sorts¹² of lovers piteously complaining,
Some of their loss, some of their love's delay,
Some of their pride, some paragons' disdain¹³,
Some fearing fraud, some fraudulently feigning,
As ev'ry one had cause of good or ill.
Amongst the rest some one, through love's con-
straining

Tormented sore, could not contain it still,
But thus brake forth, that all the temple it did
fill;

"Great Venus! queen of beauty and of grace,¹⁴
The joy of gods and men, that under sky
Dost fairest shine, and most adorn thy place;
That with thy smiling look dost pacify
The raging seas, and mak'st the storms to fly;
Thee, goddess, thee the winds, the clouds do
fear;

And, when thou spread'st thy mantle forth on
high,
The waters play, and pleasant lands appear,
And heavens laugh, and all the world shows
joyous cheer:

"Then doth the dædal¹⁵ earth throw forth to
thee
Out of her fruitful lap abundant flow'rs;
And then all living wights, soon as they see
The Spring break forth out of his lusty bow'rs,
They all do learn to play the paramours:
First do the merry birds, thy pretty pages,
Privily prick'd with thy lustful pow'rs,
Chirp loud to thee out of their leafy cages,
And thee their mother call to cool their kindly¹⁶
rages.

"Then do the salvage beasts begin to play
Their pleasant frisks, and loathe their wonted
food:
The lions roar; the tigers loudly bray;
The raging bulls rebellow through the wood,
And breaking forth dare tempt the deepest flood
To come where thou dost draw them with
desire:
So all things else, that nourish vital blood,

¹³ The disdain of their companions or rivals.

¹⁴ The four stanzas that follow are imitated from the invocation of Venus with which Lucretius opens his poem; and they may be compared with the "Second Song of Troilus," in Chaucer's "Troilus and Cressida," page 262.

¹⁵ Productive.

¹⁶ Natural.

Soon as with fury thou dost them inspire,
In generation seek to quench their inward fire.

" 'So all the world by thee at first was made,
And daily yet thou dost the same repair :
Nor aught on earth that merry is and glad,
Nor aught on earth that lovely is and fair,
But thou the same for pleasure didst prepare :
Thou art the root of all that joyous is :
Great god of men and women, queen of th' air,
Mother of laughter, and well-spring of bliss,
O grant that of my love at last I may not miss !'

" So did he say : but I, with murmur soft,
That none might hear the sorrow of my heart,
Yet inly groaning deep and sighing oft,
Besought her to grant ease unto my smart,
And to my wound her gracious help impart.
Whilst thus I spake, behold ! with happy eye
I spied where, at the Idol's feet apart,
A bevy of fair damsels close did lie,
Waiting when as the anthem should be sung on high.

" The first of them did seem of riper years
And graver countenance than all the rest ;
Yet all the rest were eke her equal peers,
Yet unto her obeyed all the best :
Her name was Womanhood ; that she exprest
By her sad semblant¹ and demeanour wise :
For steadfast still her eyes did fixed rest ;
Nor rovd at random, after gazers' guise,
Whose luring baits oftentimes do heedless hearts entice.

" And next to her sat goodly Shamefastness,
Nor ever durst her eyes from ground uprear,
Nor ever once did look up from her dross,²
As if some blame of evil she did fear,
That in her cheeks made roses oft appear :
And her against sweet Cheerfulness was plac'd,
Whose eyes, like twinkling stars in ev'ning clear,
Were deck'd with smiles that all sad humours chas'd,
And darted forth delights the which her goodly grac'd.

" And next to her sat sober Modesty,
Holding her hand upon her gentle heart ;
And her against sat comely Courtesy,
That unto ev'ry person knew her part ;
And her before was seated overthwart³
Soft Silence, and submiss⁴ Obedience,
Both link'd together never to dispart ;⁵
Both gifts of God not gotten but from thence ;
Both garlands of his saints against their foes' offence.

" Thus sat they all around in seemly rate :⁶
And in the midst of them a goodly Maid
(Ev'n in the lap of Womanhood) there sate,
The which was all in lily white array'd,
With silver streams amongst the linen stray'd ;
Like to the Morn, when first her shining face
Hath to the gloomy world itself bewray'd :

That same was fairest Amoret in place,
Shining with beauty's light and heav'nly virtue's grace.

" Whom soon as I beheld, my heart gan throb,
And weigh'd in doubt what best were to be done :
For sacrilege me seem'd the church to rob ;
And folly seem'd to leave the thing undone
Which with so strong attempt I had begun.
Then, shaking off all doubt and shamefast fear,
Which ladies' love I heard had never won
'Mongst men of worth, I to her stepp'd near,
And by the lily hand her labour'd up to rear.⁷

" Thereat that foremost matron⁸ me did blame,
And sharp rebuke for being overbold ;
Saying it was to knight unseemly shame
Upon a recluse virgin to lay hold,
That unto Venus' services was sold.⁹
To whom I thus ; 'Nay, but it fitteth best
For Cupid's man with Venus' maid to hold ;
For ill your goddess' services are drest
By virgins, and her sacrifices let to rest.'

" With that my shield I forth to her did show,
Which all that while I closely had conceal'd ;
On which when Cupid with his killing bow
And cruel shafts emblazon'd she beheld,
At sight thereof she was with terror quell'd,
And said no more : but I, which all that while
The pledge of faith, her hand, engag'd held
(Like wary hind within the weedy soil),
For no intreaty would forego so glorious spoil.

" And evermore upon the goddess' face
Mine eye was fix'd, for fear of her offence :
Whom when I saw with amiable grace
To laugh on me, and favour my pretence,
I was embolden'd with more confidence ;
And, naught for niceness nor for envy sparing,
In presence of them all forth led her thence,
All looking on, and like astonish'd staring,
Yet to lay hand on her not one of all them daring.

" She often pray'd, and often me besought,
Sometime with tender tears, to let her go,
Sometime with witching smiles : but yet, fo naught

That ever she to me could say or do,
Could she her wish'd freedom from me woo ;
But forth I led her through the temple gate,
By which I hardly pass'd with much ado :
But that same lady,¹⁰ which me friended late
In entrance, did me also friend in my retrate.¹¹

" No less did Danger threaten me with dread,
When as he saw me, maugré¹² all his pow'r,
That glorious spoil of beauty with me lead,
Than Cerberus, when Orpheus did recour¹³
His leman¹⁴ from the Stygian prince's bow'r.
But evermore my shield did me defend
Against the storm of ev'ry dreadful stowre :¹⁵
Thus safely with my love I thence did wend."
So ended he his tale, where I this canto end.

¹ Grave aspect.

² Opposite.

³ Separate.

⁴ Raise.

⁵ Writing-table, desk.

⁶ Submissive.

⁷ Arrangement, order.

⁸ Womanhood.

⁹ Devoted.

¹⁰ Withdrawal.

¹¹ Recover.

¹² Assault, peril.

¹³ Concord.

¹⁴ In spite of.

¹⁵ His mistress, Eurydice.

CANTO XI.

*Marinell's former wound is heal'd;
He comes to Proteus' hall,
Where Thamäs doth the Medway weed,¹
And feasts the sea-gods all.*

BUT ah! for pity that I have thus long
Left a fair lady languishing in pain!
Now well-away! that I have done such wrong,
To let fair Florimell in bands remain,
In bands of love, and in sad thralldom's chain;
From which unless some heav'nly power her free
By miracle not yet appearing plain,
She longer yet is like captiv'd to be;
That ev'n to think thereof it only pities me.

Here need you to remember, how erewhile¹
Unlovely Proteus, missing² to his mind
That virgin's love to win by wit or wile,
Her threw into a dungeon deep and blind,³
And there in chains her cruelly did bind,
In hope thereby her to his bent to draw:
For, when as neither gifts nor graces kind
Her constant mind could move at all he saw,
He thought her to compel by cruelty and awe.

Deep in the bottom of a huge great rock
The dungeon was, in which her bound he left,
That neither iron bars, nor brazen lock,
Did need to guard from force or secret theft
Of all her lovers which would her have reft;
For wall'd it was with waves, which rag'd and
roar'd

As they the cliff in pieces would have cleft;
Besides, ten thousand monsters foul abhor'd
Did wait about it, gaping grisly, all begor'd.⁴

And in the midst thereof did Horror dwell,
And Darkness dread that never view'd day,
Like to the baleful house of lowest hell,
In which old Styx her aged bones alway
(Old Styx the grandame of the gods) doth lay.
There did this luckless maid sev'n months abide,
Nor ever evening saw, nor morning's ray,
Nor ever from the day the night descried,
But thought it all one night, that did no hours
divide.

And all this was for love of Marinell,
Who her despis'd (ah! who would her despise!)
And women's love did from his heart expel,
And all those joys that weak mankind entice.
Nathless his pride full dearly he did price;⁵
For of⁶ a woman's hand it was y-wroke,⁷
That of the wound he yet in languor lies,
Nor can be cur'd of that cruel stroke
Which Britomart him gave, when he did her
provoke.

Yet far and near the nymph, his mother, sought,
And many salves did to his sore apply,
And many herbs did use: but when as naught
She saw could ease his rankling malady,

¹ Formerly. See canto viii. of the third book.
² Failing. ³ Dark.
⁴ Stained with gore. ⁵ Pay for. ⁶ By.
⁷ Revenged; by the hand of Britomart, as told in
canto iv. of the third book.
⁸ Haste. ⁹ Promised.

At last to Tryphon she for help did hie⁸
(This Tryphon is the sea-gods' surgeon hight),
Whom she besought to find some remedy:
And for his pains a whistle him behight,⁹
That of a fish's shell was wrought with rare
delight.

So well that leach did hark to her request,
And did so well employ his careful pain,
That in short space his hurts he had redrest,¹⁰
And him restor'd to healthful state again:
In which he long time after did remain
There with the nymph his mother, like her
thrall;¹¹

Who sore against his will did him retain,
For fear of peril which to him might fall
Through his too venturous prowess prov'd over
all.

It fortun'd then, a solemn feast was there
To all the sea-gods and their fruitful seed,
In honour of the spousals which then were
Betwixt the Medway and the Thames agreed.
Long had the Thames (as we in records read)
Before that day her woo'd to his bed;
But the proud nymph would for no worldly
meed,¹²

Nor no entreaty, to his love be led;
Till now at last relenting she to him was wed.

So both agreed that this their bridal feast
Should for the gods in Proteus' house be made;
To which they all repair'd, both most and least,¹³
As well which in the mighty ocean trade,¹⁴
As that in rivers swim, or brooks do wade:
All which, not if a hundred tongues to tell,
And hundred mouths, and voice of brass I had,
And endless memory that might excel,
In order as they came could I recount them well.

Help therefore, O thou sacred imp¹⁵ of Jove,
The nurling of Dame Memory his dear,
To whom those rolls, laid up in heav'n above,
And records of antiquity appear,
To which no wit of man may comen near;
Help me to tell the names of all those Floods
And all those Nymphs, which then assembled
were

To that great banquet of the watery gods,
And all their sundry kinds, and all their hid
abodes.

First came great Neptune, with his three-fork'd
mace,¹⁶

That rules the seas and makes them rise or fall;
His dewy locks did drop with brine apace
Under his diadem imperial:
And by his side his queen with coronal,
Fair Amphitrite, most divinely fair,
Whose ivory shoulders weren cover'd all,
As with a robe, with her own silver hair,
And deck'd with pearls which th' Indian seas
for her prepare.

¹⁰ Healed. ¹¹ As if he were her slave.
¹² Gift, reward. ¹³ Greatest and smallest.
¹⁴ Resort, have their abode.
¹⁵ Child. Clio, the historic Muse, daughter of Jupiter
and Mnemosyne or Memory.
¹⁶ Sceptre; the trident.

These marchèd far before the other crew :
And all the way before them, as they went,
Triton his trumpet shrill before them blew,
For goodly triumph and great jolliment,¹
That made the rocks to roar as they were rent.
And after them the royal issue came,
Which of them sprung by lineal descent :
First the sea-gods, which to themselves do claim
The pow'r to rule the billows, and the waves to
tame :

Phorœus, the father of that fatal brood
By whom those old herôes won such fame ;²
And Glaucus, that wise soothsayers understood ;
And tragic Ino's son, the which became
A god of seas through his mad mother's blame,³
Now hight Palaemon, and is sailors' friend ;
Great Brontes ; and Astræus, that did shame
Himself with incest of his kin unkenn'd ;⁴
And huge Orion, that doth tempests still por-
tend ;

The rich Cteatus ; and Eurytus long ;
Neleus and Pelias, lovely brethren both ;
Mighty Chrysaor ; and Caius strong ;
Eurypylus, that calms the waters wroth ;
And fair Euphœmus, that upon them go'th
As on the ground, without dismay or dread ;
Fierce Eryx ; and Alebius, that know'th
The waters' depth, and doth their bottom tread ;
And sad Asopus, comely with his hoary head.

There also some most famous founders were
Of puissant nations, which the world possesseth,
Yet sons of Neptune, now assembled here :
Ancient Ogyges, ev'n the ancientest :
And Inachus renown'd above the rest ;
Phoenix ; and Aon ; and Pelagus old ;
Great Belus ; Phœax ; and Agenor best ;
And mighty Albion, father of the bold
And warlike people which the Britain Islands
hold :

For Albion the son of Neptune was ;
Who, for the proof of his great puissance,
Out of his Albion did on dry-foot pass
Into old Gaul, that now is callèd France,
To fight with Hercules, that did advance
To vanquish all the world with matchless might ;
And there his mortal part by great mischance
Was slain ; but that which is th' immortal sprite
Lives still, and to this Feast with Neptune's
seed was dight.⁵

But what do I their names seek to rehearse,
Which all the world have with their issue fill'd ?
How can they all in this so narrow verse
Containèd be, and in small compass held ?
Let them record them that are better skill'd,
And know the monuments of passèd age :

¹ Pleasure.

² He was fabled to be the father of the Grææ, the Gorgons, the Hesperian dragon, the Hesperian maids, and Scylla.

³ Driven mad by Hera, to punish her love for Athamas, Ino threw herself into the sea with her son ; and both became marine deities.

⁴ Unknown.

⁵ Prepared.

⁶ Language. See note 28, page 119.

⁷ Helen, daughter of Tyndarus, king of Sparta.

⁸ The Rhone, springing from its lofty glacier, at the foot of Mount Furca, 5470 feet above the sea.

Only what needeth shall be here fulfill'd,
T' express some part of that great equipage
Which from great Neptune do derive their per-
centage.

Next came the aged Ocean and his Dame
Old Tethys, th' oldest two of all the rest ;
For all the rest of those two parents came,
Which afterward both sea and land possess ;
Of all which Nereus, th' eldest and the best,
Did first proceed ; than which none more upright
Nor more sincere in word and deed profest ;
Most void of guile, most free from foul despite,
Doing himself and teaching others to do right :

Thereto he was expert in prophecies,
And could the leden⁶ of the gods unfold ;
Through which, when Paris brought his famous
prize,

The fair Tyndarid lass,⁷ he him foretold
That her all Greece with many a champion bold
Should fetch again, and finally destroy
Proud Priam's town : so wise is Nereus old,
And so well skill'd : nathless he takes great joy
Ofttimes amongst the wanton nymphs to sport
and toy.

And after him the famous Rivers came,
Which do the earth enrich and beautify :
The fertile Nile, which creatures new doth frame ;
Long Rhodanus, whose source springs from the
sky ;⁸

Fair Ister,⁹ flowing from the mountains high ;
Divine Scamander, purpled yet with blood
Of Greeks and Trojans which therein did die ;
Pactólus glist'ring with his golden flood ;
And Tigris fierce, whose streams of none may be
withstood ;

Great Ganges ; and immortal Eúphrates ;
Deep Indus ; and Mæander intricate ;
Slow Peneus ; and tempestuous Phasides ;¹⁰
Swift Rhine ; and Alpheus still immaculate ;¹¹
Araxes, fearèd for great Cyrus' fate ;
Tibris,¹² renownèd for the Romans' fame ;
Rich Orinoco, though but knownen late ;
And that huge river, which doth bear his name
Of¹³ warlike Amazons who do possess the same.

Joy on those warlike women, which so long
Can from all men so rich a kingdom hold !
And shame on you, O men, which boast your
strong

And valiant hearts, in thoughts less hard and
bold,

Yet quail in conquest of that land of gold !¹⁴
But this to you, O Britons, most pertains,
To whom the right hereof itself hath sold ;
The which, for sparing little cost or pains,
Lose so immortal glory, and so endless gains.

⁹ The Danube ; one of whose sources, in the castle-yard of Donaueschingen, in Baden, is about 3000 feet above sea level.

¹⁰ The Phasis, a river in Colchis.

¹¹ After its junction with the Eurotas, the Alpheus flowed on side by side with its muddier companion without mingling its waters.

¹² Tiber.

¹³ From.

¹⁴ The contest with Spain in the New World, the "land of gold," was the great task of the Elizabethan heroes and navigators, whom the poet here urges on to new efforts.

Then was there heard a most celestial sound
Of dainty music, which did next ensue ¹
Before the spouse: that was Arion crown'd; ²
Who, playing on his harp, unto him drew
The ears and hearts of all that goodly crew;
That even yet the dolphin, which him bore
Through the Ægean seas from pirates' view,
Stood still by him astonish'd at his lore, ³
And all the raging seas for joy forgot to roar.

So went he playing on the watery plain:
Soon after whom the lovely bridegroom came,
The noble Thames, with all his goodly train.
But him before there went, as best became,
His ancient parents, ⁴ namely th' ancient Thame;
But much more aged was his wife than he,
The Ouse, whom men do lais rightly name;
Full weak and crooked creature seem'd she,
And almost blind through eld, ⁵ that scarce her
way could see.

Therefore on either side she was sustain'd
Of two small grooms, which by their names
were hight

The Churn and Cherwell, two small streams,
which pain'd

Themselves her footing to direct aright,
Which fail'd oft through faint and feeble plight:
But Thame was stronger, and of better stay;
Yet seem'd full ag'd by his outward sight,
With head all hoary, and his beard all gray,
Dew'd with silver drops that trickled down
alway:

And eke he somewhat seem'd to stoop afore
With bow'd back, by reason of the load
And ancient heavy burden which he bore
Of that fair City, ⁶ wherein make abode
So many learn'd imps, ⁷ that shoot abroad,
And with their branches spread all Brittany,
No less than do her elder sister's ⁸ brood.
Joy to you both, ye double nursery
Of arts! but, Oxford, thine doth Thame most
glorify.

But he their son ⁹ full fresh and jolly was,
All deck'd in a robe of watchet hue. ¹⁰
On which the waves, glitt'ring like crystal glass,
So cunningly enwoven were, that few
Could weenen ¹¹ whether they were false or true:
And on his head like to a coronet
He wore, that seem'd strange to common view,
In which were many tow'rs and castles set,
That it encompass'd round as with a golden fret. ¹²
Like as the mother of the gods, they say,
In her great iron chariot wents to ride
When to Jove's palace she doth take her way,
Old Cybelé, array'd with pompous pride,
Wearing a diadem embattled wide
With hundred turrets, like a turribant. ¹³
With such an one was Thame beautified;

¹ Follow. ² See note 21, page 237. ³ Skill.

⁴ The Thames, according to the common opinion in Spenser's days, was formed by the junction of the Thame and the Isla.

⁵ Old age. ⁶ Oxford. ⁷ Children.

⁸ Cambridge, called the "elder sister" of Oxford, because the traditions of its University's foundation carry it back to a period 150 years earlier than that of

That was, to wit, the famous Troynovant, ¹⁴
In which her kingdom's throne is chiefly resiant. ¹⁵
And round about him many a pretty page
Attended duly, ready to obey;
All little rivers which owe vassalage
To him, as to their lord, and tribute pay:
The chalky Kennet; and the Thetis gray;
The moorish Colne; and the soft-sliding Brean;
The wanton Lea, that oft doth lose his way;
And the still Darent, in whose waters clean
Ten thousand fishes play and deck his pleasant
stream.

Then came his neighbour floods which nigh him
dwell,

And water all the English soil throughout;
They all on him this day attended well,
And with meet service waited him about;
Nor none disdain'd low to him to lout: ¹⁶
No, not the stately Severn grudg'd at all,
Nor storming Humber, though he look'd stout;
But both him honour'd as their principal,
And let their swelling waters low before him fall.

There was the speedy Tamar, which divides
The Cornish and the Devonish confines;
Through both whose borders swiftly down it
glides,

And, meeting Plym, to Plymouth thence declines:
And Dart, nigh chok'd with sands of tinny mines:
But Avon march'd in more stately path,
Proud of his adamants ¹⁷ with which he shines
And glisters wide, as als' ¹⁸ of wondrous Bath,
And Bristol fair, which on his waves he buildd
hath.

And there came Stour with terrible aspect,
Bearing his six deform'd heads on high,
That doth his course through Blandford plains
direct,
And washeth Wimborne meads in season dry.
Next him went Wileyburn with passage sly,
That of his wiliness his name doth take,
And of himself doth name the shire ¹⁹ thereby:
And Mole, that like a nousling ²⁰ mole doth make
His way still under ground till Thames he over-
take.

Then came the Rother, deck'd all with woods
Like a wood god, and flowing fast to Rye;
And Stour, that parteth with his pleasant floods
The Eastern Saxons from the Southern nigh, ²¹
And Clare and Harwich both doth beautify:
Him follow'd Yare, soft washing Norwich wall,
And with him brought a present joyfully
Of his own fish unto their festival,
Whose like none else could shew, the which
they ruffins call.

Next these the plenteous Ouse came far from
land,
By many a city and by many a town,

Oxford's—though more authentic records give the
palm of antiquity to the latter. ⁹ The Thames.

¹⁰ Blue.

¹¹ Judge.

¹² Band.

¹³ Turban.

¹⁴ London.

¹⁵ Resident.

¹⁶ Bend.

¹⁷ The crystals known as Bristol stones.

¹⁸ Also.

¹⁹ Wiltshire.

²⁰ Burrowing.

²¹ Dividing Essex and Suffolk.

And, many rivers taking underhand
Into his waters as he passeth down
(The Cle, the Were, the Grant, the Stour, the
Rowne),
Thence doth by Huntingdon and Cambridge flit,
My mother Cambridge,¹ whom as with a crown
He doth adorn, and is adorn'd of it
With many a gentle Muse and many a learned
wit.

And after him the fatal Welland went,
That if old saws prove true (which God forbid !)
Shall drown all Holland² with his excrement,
And shall see Stamford, though now homely hid,
Then shine in learning more than ever did
Cambridge or Oxford, England's goodly beams.
And next to him the Nen down softly slid ;
And bounteous Trent, that in himself enseams³
Both thirty sorts of fish and thirty sundry
streams.

Next these came Tyne, along whose stony bank
That Roman monarch built a brazen wall,
Which might the feeble Britons strongly flank
Against the Picts that swarm'd over all ;
Which yet thereof Gualsever⁴ they do call :
And Tweed, the limit betwixt Logris⁵ land
And Albany :⁶ and Eden, though but small,
Yet often stain'd with blood of many a band
Of Scots and English both, that tin'd⁶ on his
strand.

Then came those six sad brethren, like forlorn,
That whilom were, as antique fathers tell,
Six valiant knights of one fair nymph y-born,
Which did in noble deeds of arms excel,
And wonn'd⁷ there where now York people
dwell ;

Still Ure, swift Wharf, and Ouse the most of
might,

High Swale, unquiet Nidd, and troublous Skell ;
All whom a Scythian king, that Humber hight,
Slew cruelly, and in the river drown'd quite :

But pass'd not long, ere Brutus' warlike son,
Locrinus, them aveng'd, and the same date⁸
Which the proud Humber unto them had done,
By equal doom repaid on his own pate :
For in the self-same river where he late
Had drench'd them, he drown'd him again ;
And nam'd the river of his wretched fate :⁹
Whose bad condition yet it doth retain,
Oft toss'd with his storms which therein still
remain.

These after came the stony shallow Lone,¹⁰
That to old Lancaster his name doth lend :
And following Dee, which Britons long y-gone
Did call divine, that doth by Chester tend ;
And Conway, which out of his stream doth send
Plenty of pearls to deck his dames withal ;
And Lindus, that his pikes doth most commend,

¹ Spenser was a student at Pembroke Hall, in Cambridge University.

² The south-eastern part of the county of Lincoln is called Holland.

³ Contains or comprehends ; "fattens" is the old explanation, but it could apply to the fish alone ; for the Trent can scarcely be said to "fatten" a stream which swells its own bulk.

⁴ Wall of Severus.

⁵ England and Scotland. See page 396.

⁶ Were slain, perished.

⁷ Dwelled.

Of which the ancient Lincoln men do call :
All these together march'd toward Proteus' hall.

Nor thence the Irish rivers absent were ;
Since no less famous than the rest they be,
And join in neighbourhood of kingdom near,
Why should they not likewise in love agree,
And joy likewise this solemn day to see ?
They saw it all, and pleasant were in place ;
Though I them all, according their degree,
Cannot recount, nor tell their hidden race,
Nor read¹¹ the savage countries thorough which
they pace.

There was the Liffey rolling down the lea ;
The sandy Slane ;¹² the stony Aubrion ;
The spacious Shannon spreading like a sea ;
The pleasant Boyne ; the fishy fruitful Bann ;
Swift Awniduff, which of the Englishman
Is call'd Blackwater ; and the Liffar deep ;
Sad Trowis, that once his people overran ;
Strong Allo tumbling from Slievelogher steep ;
And Mulla mine, whose waves I whilom taught
to weep.¹³

And there the three renown'd brethren were,
Which that great giant Blomius begot
Of the fair nymph Rheusa wand'ring there :
One day, as she to shun the season hot
Under Slievebloom in shady grove was got,
This giant found her and by force deflow'r'd ;
Whereof conceiving, she in time forth brought
These three fair sons, which being thence forth
pour'd

In three great rivers ran, and many countries
scour'd.

The first the gentle Suir, that, making way
By sweet Clonmell, adorns rich Waterford ;
The next, the stubborn Nore, whose waters gray
By fair Kilkenny and Rosseponté board ;
The third, the goodly Barrow, which doth hoard
Great heaps of salmons in his deep bosom :
All which, long sunder'd, do at last accord¹⁴
To join in one, ere to the sea they come ;¹⁵
So, flowing all from one, all one at last become.

There also was the wide embay'd Mare ;¹⁶
The pleasant Bandon, crown'd with many a
wood ;

The spreading Lee that like an island fair,
Encloseth Cork with his divided flood ;
And baleful Oure, late stain'd with English
blood :

With many more whose names no tongue can
tell.

All which that day in order seemly good
Did on the Thames attend, and waited well
To do their dueful service, as to them befell.

Then came the bride, the lovely Medway came,
Clad in a vesture of unknown gear¹⁷

⁸ The same gift, or fate, of death.

⁹ See page 396.

¹¹ Declare.

¹² Spenser's Irish residence, Kilscolman Castle, stood near the banks of the Mulla, in county Cork ; there he probably wrote his poem of "Astrophel"—a lament for the death of Sir Philip Sidney—and his "Tears of the Muses."

¹⁴ Agree.

¹⁵ In Waterford Harbour.

¹⁶ Broadening into Kenmare River or Bay.

¹⁷ Material.

¹⁰ The Lune.

¹³ Slaney.

And uncouth¹ fashion, yet her well became,
That seem'd like silver sprinkled here and there
With glitt'ring spangs² that did like stars appear,
And wav'd upon, like water chamelet,³
To hide the metal, which yet ev'rywhere
Bewray'd itself, to let men plainly wot⁴
It was no mortal work, that seem'd and yet
was not.

Her goodly locks adown her back did flow
Unto her waist, with flow'rs bescatter'd,
The which ambrosial odours forth did throw
To all about, and all her shoulders spread
As a new spring; and likewise on her head
A chaplet of sundry flow'rs she wore,
From under which the dewy humour shed
Did trickle down her hair, like to the hear
Congeal'd little drops which do the morn
adore.⁵

On her two pretty handmaids did attend,
One call'd the Theise, the other call'd the
Crane;

Which on her waited things amiss to mend,
And both behind upheld her spreading train;
Under the which her feet appear'd plain,
Her silver feet, fair wash'd against this day;
And her before there pac'd pages twain,
Both clad in colours like and like array,
The Doune and eke the Frith, both which pre-
par'd her way.

And after these the sea-nymphs march'd all,
All goodly damsels, deck'd with long green hair,
Whom of their sire Neréides men call,
All which the Ocean's daughter to him bare,
The gray-ey'd Doris; all which fifty are;
All which she there on her attending had:
Swift Proto; mild Eucraté; Thetis fair;
Soft Spio; sweet Endoré; Sao sad;
Light Doto; wanton Glaucoé; and Galené glad;

White-hand Eunica; proud Dynamené;
Joyous Thalia; goodly Amphitrite;
Lovely Pasithee; kind Eulimené;
Light-foot Cymothoë; and sweet Melite;
Fairest Pherusa; Phao lily white;
Wonder'd⁶ Agavé; Poris; and Nessæ;
With Erato that doth in love delight;
And Panopé; and wise Protomedæ;
And snowy-neck'd Doris; and milk-white Gala-
tæa;

Speedy Hippothoë; and chaste Actæa;
Large Lisianassa; and Pronœa sage;
Euagoré; and light Pontopœa;
And, she that with her least word can assuage
The surging seas when they do sorest rage,
Cymodocé; and stout Autonoe;
And Neso; and Eioné well in age;
And, seeming still to smile, Glauconomé;
And, she that hight of many hests, Polynomé;⁷
Fresh Alimeda, deck'd with garland green;

¹ Strange, rare.

² Camlet.

³ Adorn.

⁴ Of many laws.

⁵ Will.

⁶ Spanglea.

⁷ Know.

⁸ Admired.

⁹ Bright.

¹⁰ Easy.

Hyponeo, with salt-bedew'd wrists;
Laomedæa, like the crystal sheen;⁸
Liagoré, much prais'd for wise behests;
And Psamathé for her broad snowy breasts;
Cymo; Eupompé; and Themisté just;
And, she that virtue loves and vice detests,
Euarna; and Menippé true in trust;
And Nemertea learn'd well to rule her lust.⁹

All these the daughters of old Nereus were,
Which have the sea in charge to them assign'd,
To rule his tides, and surges to uprear,
To bring forth storms, or fast them to upbind,
And sailors save from wrecks of wrathful wind.
And yet besides three thousand more there
were

Of th' Ocean's seed, both Jove's and Phœbus'
kind;

The which in floods and fountains do appear,
And all mankind do nourish with their waters
clear.

The which, more eath¹⁰ it were for mortal wight
To tell the sands, or count the stars on high,
Or aught more hard, than think to reckon right.
But well I wot¹¹ that these, which I descrie,¹²
Were present at this great solemnity:
And there, amongst the rest, the mother was
Of luckless Marinell, Cymodocé;¹³
Which, for¹⁴ my Muse herself now tir'd has,
Unto another canto I will overpass.

CANTO XII.

*Marin, for love of Florimell,
In languor wastes his life:
The Nymph, his mother, getteth her,
And gives to him for wife.*

O WHAT an endless work have I in hand,
To count the Sea's abundant progeny,
Whose fruitful seed far passeth those in land,
And also those which won¹⁵ in th' azure sky!
For much more eath¹⁶ to tell the stars on high,
All be¹⁶ they endless seem in estimation,
Than to recount the Sea's posterity:
So fertile be the floods in generation,
So huge their numbers, and so numberless their
nation.

Therefore the antique wizards well invented
That Venus of the foamy sea was bred;
For that the seas by her are most augmented.
Witness th' exceeding fry¹⁷ which there are fed,
And wondrous shoals which may of none be
read.¹⁸

Then blame me not if I have err'd in count
Of gods, of nymphs, of rivers, yet unread:¹⁹
For though their numbers do much more sur-
mount,
Yet all those same were there which erst I did
recount.

¹¹ Know.

¹² Called Cymocent in the fourth canto of the fourth book.

¹³ Dwell.

¹⁴ Swarm, host.

¹⁵ Describe.

¹⁶ Because.

¹⁷ Although.

¹⁸ Unmentioned.

All those were there, and many other more,
Whose names and nations were too long to tell,
That Proteus' house they fill'd ev'n to the door;
Yet were they all in order, as befell,
According their degrees dispos'd well.
Amongst the rest was fair Cymodoce,
The mother of unlucky Marinell,
Who thither with her came, to learn and see
The manner of the gods when they at banquet be.

But, for he was half mortal, being bred
Of mortal sire, though of immortal womb,
He might not with immortal food be fed,
Nor with th' eternal gods to banquet come;
But walk'd abroad, and round about did roam
To view the building of that uncouth place,
That seem'd unlike unto his earthly home:
Where, as he to and fro by chance did trace,¹
There unto him betid a disadventurous² case.

Under the hanging of a hideous cliff
He heard the lamentable voice of one
That piteously complain'd her careful³ grief,
Which never she before disclos'd to none,
But to herself her sorrow did bemoan:
So feelingly her case she did complain,
That ruth⁴ it mov'd in the rocky stone,
And made it seem to feel her grievous pain,
And oft to groan with billows' beating from the
main:

It is Florimell, who bewails her hard hap, the
hard heart of her captor, and the indifference
of her lover, that lets her die when he might
have delivered her by arms. Having wept a
space, she begins anew, calling on the gods of sea,
"if any gods at all have care of right or ruth of
wretches' wrong," to set her free, or grant her
death, or make her lover the companion of her
captivity. But then she falls to rebuking her
own vain judgment; for Marinell, she says,
"where he list goes loose, and laughs at me."
"So ever loose, so ever happy be!" she cries,
and calls on her lover to know that her sorrow
is all for him.

All which complaint when Marinell had heard,
And understood the cause of all her care
To come of him, for using her so hard;
His stubborn heart, that never felt misfare,⁵
Was touch'd with soft remorse and pity rare;
That ev'n for grief of mind he oft did groan,
And inly wish that in his power it were
Her to redress: but, since he means found none,
He could no more but her great misery bemoan.

Thus whilst his stony heart with tender ruth
Was touch'd, and mighty courage mollified,
Dame Venus' son, that tameth stubborn youth
With iron bit, and maketh him abide
Till like a victor on his back he ride,
Into his mouth his mast'ring bridle threw,
That made him steep, till he did him bestride:
Then gan he make him tread his steps anew,
And learn to love by learning lover's pains to
rue.

¹ Pass, roam.² Lamentable, unhappy.⁴ Pity.³ Sorrowful.⁵ Misfortune.

In his griev'd mind he began to devise how
he might free the lady from that dungeon;
whether by making fair and humble petition
to Proteus, or taking her by force with sword
and targe, or stealing her away. Each plan has
too many difficulties; so he finds no resource
but to reproach himself for despising so chaste
and fair a dame, and bringing to such misery
her who for his sake "refus'd a god that had
her sought to wife."

In this sad plight he walk'd here and there,
And roam'd round about the rock in vain,
As he had lost himself he wist not where;
Oft list'ning if he might her hear again;
And still bemoaning her unworthy pain;
Like as a hind whose calf is fall'n unware
Into some pit, where she him hears complain,
A hundred times about the pit-side fares,
Right sorrowfully mourning her bereav'd cares.⁶

And now by this the feast was thoroughly ended,
And ev'ry one gan homeward to resort:
Which seeing, Marinell was sore offended
That his departure thence should be so short,⁷
And leave his love in that sea-wall'd fort:
Yet durst he not his mother disobey;
But, her attending in full seemly sort,
Did march amongst the many all the way;
And all the way did inly mourn, like one astray.

Being return'd to his mother's bow'r,
In solitary silence, far from wight,⁸
He gan record the lamentable stowre⁹
In which his wretched love lay day and night,
For his dear sake, that ill deserv'd that plight:
The thought whereof empiere'd his heart so
deep,

That of no worldly thing he took delight;
Nor daily food did take, nor nightly sleep,
But pin'd, and mourn'd, and languish'd, and
alone did weep;

That in short space his wonted cheerful hue
Gan fade, and lively spirits deaded quite:
His cheek-bones raw, and eye-pits hollow grew,
And brawny arms had lost their knowen might;
That nothing like himself he seem'd in sight.
Ere long so weak of limb, and sick of love,
He wox, that longer he not¹⁰ stand upright,
But to his bed was brought, and laid above,
Like rueful ghost, unable once to stir or move.

His mother, sore griev'd at his inexplicable
sickness, wept over and tended him night and
day; Tryphon, again summoned, assured her
that it was no old wound which now troubled
him, but some other malady or grief unknown,
which he could not discern; and the attempts
of the nymph to extract the truth from Marinell
himself were unavailing—he "still her answer'd,
there was naught."

Nathless she rested not so satisfied;
But, leaving watery gods, as booting naught,
Unto the shiny heav'n in haste she hied,
And thence Apollo king of leaches brought.

⁶ The object of her cares, of which she has been deprived.⁷ Soon.⁸ From any mortal.⁹ Affliction.¹⁰ Could not.

Apollo came ; who, soon as he had sought
Through his disease, did by and by out find
That he did languish of some inward thought,
The which afflicted his engriev'd mind ;
Which love he read¹ to be, that leads each
living kind.

Which when he had unto his mother told,
She gan thereat to fret and greatly grieve ;
And, coming to her son, gan first to scold
And chide at him that made her misbelieve :
But afterward she gan him soft to shrieve,²
And woo with fair entreaty, to disclose
Which of the nymphs his heart so sore did
meve :³

For sure she ween'd it was some one of those
Which he had lately seen, that for his love he
chose.

Now less she fear'd that same fatal read,⁴
That warn'd him of women's love beware :
Which, being meant of mortal creature's seed,
For love of nymphs she thought she need not
care,

But promis'd him, whatever wight she were,
That she her love to him would shortly gain :
So he her told : but soon as she did hear
That Florimell it was which wrought his pain,
She gan afresh to chafe, and grieve in ev'ry
vein.

Yet, since she saw the strait extremity
In which his life unluckily was laid,
It was no time to scan the prophecy,
Whether old Proteus true or false had said,
That his decay should happen by a maid ;
(It's late, in death, of danger to advise,⁵
Or love forbid him that is life denay'd ;⁶)
But rather gan in troubled mind devise
How she that lady's liberty might enterprise.

To Proteus' self to sue she thought it vain,
Who was the root and worker of her woe ;
Nor unto any meaner to complain ;
But unto great King Neptune's self did go,
And, on her knee before him falling low,
Made humble suit unto his majesty
To grant to her her son's life, which his foe,
A cruel tyrant, had presumptuously
By wicked doom condemn'd a wretched death
to die.

To whom god Neptune, softly smiling, thus ;
" Daughter, me seems of double wrong ye plain,
'Gainst one that hath both wrong'd you and us :
For death t'award I ween'd did appertain
To none but to the sea's sole sovereign ;

¹ Perceived.

² Move.

³ Denied.

⁴ Declaration.

⁵ Question, confess.

⁶ Consider.

⁷ Declare.

⁸ Replevy, or replevin, is a law term, meaning to
take possession of property claimed, giving security at

Read⁷ therefore who it is which this hath
wrought,
And for what cause ; the truth discover plain :
For never wight so evil did or thought,
But would some rightful cause pretend, though
rightly naught."

To whom she answer'd ; " Then it is by name
Proteus, that hath ordain'd my son to die ;
For that a waif, the which by fortune came
Upon your seas, he claim'd as property :
And yet nor his, nor his in equity,
But yours the waif by high prerogative :
Therefore I humbly crave your majesty
It to replevy,⁸ and my son reprove :⁹
So shall you by one gift save all us three alive."

He granted it : and straight his warrant made,
Under the sea-god's seal authentical,
Commanding Proteus straight t'enlarge the maid
Which, wand'ring on his seas imperial,
He lately took, and withens¹⁰ kept as thrall.
Which she receiving with meet thankfulness,
Departed straight to Proteus therewithal :
Who, reading it with inward loathfulness,
Was griev'd to restore the pledge he did possess.

Yet durst he not the warrant to withstand,
But unto her deliver'd Florimell :
Whom she receiving by the lily hand,
Admir'd her beauty much, as she might well,
For she all living creatures did excel ;
And was right joyous that she gotten had
So fair a wife for her son Marinell.
So home with her she straight the virgin lad,¹¹
And show'd her to him, then being sore bestad.¹²

Who, soon as he beheld that angel's face,
Adorn'd with all divine perfection,
His cheer'd heart eftsoons away gan chase
Sad death, revived with her sweet inspection,
And feeble spirit inly felt refection ;¹³
As wither'd weed, through cruel winter's time,¹⁴
That feels the warmth of sunny beams' reflection,
Lifts up his head, that did before decline,
And gins to spread his leaf before the fair sun-
shine.

Right so himself did Marinell uprear,
When he in place his dearest love did spy ;
And though his limbs could not his body bear,
Nor former strength return so suddenly,
Yet cheerful signs he show'd outwardly.
Nor less was she in secret heart affected,
But that she mask'd it with modesty,
For fear she should of lightness be detected :
Which to another place I leave to be perfected.

the same time to submit the question, of property to a
legal tribunal within a given time.

⁹ Reprieve, rescue from death.

¹¹ Led.

¹² Refreshment.

¹⁰ Since.

¹³ Bestad, distressed.

¹⁴ Affliction, injury.

THE FIFTH BOOK
OF
THE FAERIE QUEEN:

CONTAINING

THE LEGEND OF ARTEGALL, OR OF
JUSTICE.

So oft as I with state of present time
The image of the antique world compare,
When as man's age was in his freshest prime,
And the first blossom of fair virtue bare ;
Such odds I find 'twixt those, and these which
are,

As that, through long continuance of his course,
Me seems the world is run quite out of square
From the first point of his appointed source ;
And, being once amiss, grows daily worse and
worse :

For from the golden age, that first was nam'd,
It's now at erst¹ become a stony one ;
And men themselves, the which at first were
fram'd

Of earthly mould, and form'd of flesh and bone,
Are now transform'd into hardest stone ;
Such as behind their backs (so backward bred)
Were thrown by Pyrrha and Deucalion :
And if than those may any worse be read,²
They into that ere long will be degender'd.³

Let none then blame me, if, in discipline
Of virtue and of civil use's lore,
I do not form them to the common line
Of present days which are corrupted sore ;
But to the antique use⁴ which was of yore,
When good was only for itself desir'd,
And all men sought their own, and none no
more ;

When Justice was not for most meed out-hir'd,
But simple Truth did reign, and was of all
admir'd.

For that which all men then did Virtue call,
Is now call'd Vice ; and that which Vice was
hight,

Is now hight Virtue, and so us'd of all :
Right now is wrong, and wrong that was is right ;
As all things else in time are chang'd quite.
Nor wonder ; for the heavens' revolution
Is wander'd far from where it first was pight,⁵
And so do make contrary constitution
Of all this lower world toward his dissolution.

For whose list into the heavens look,
And search the courses of the rolling spheres,
Shall find that from the point where they first
took

Their setting forth, in these few thousand years
They all are wander'd much ;⁶ that plain
appears :

¹ At length.

² Discovered.

³ Degenerated.

⁴ Usage.

⁵ Fixed.

⁶ The allusion is to the precession of the equinoxes, through which the stars that a century before Christ were in the sign Aries are now in Taurus, those in Taurus now in Gemini, and so on.

For that same golden fleecy ram, which bore
Phrixus and Hellé⁷ from their stepdame's fears,
Hath now forgot where he was plac'd of yore,
And shoulder'd hath the bull which fair Europa
bore :

And eke the bull hath, with his bow-bent horn,
So hardly butted those two twins of Jove,
That they have crush'd the crab, and quite him
borne

Into the great Nemean lion's grove.
So now all range, and do at random rove
Out of their proper places far away,
And all this world with them amiss do move,
And all his creatures from their course astray ;
Till they arrive at their last ruinous decay.

Nor is that same great glorious lamp of light,
That doth enlumine all these lesser fires,
In better case, nor keeps his course more right,
But is miscarried with the other spheres :
For since the term of fourteen hundred years,
That learned Ptolemy his height did take,
He is declin'd from that mark of theirs
Nigh thirty minutes to the southern lake ;⁸
That makes me fear in time he will us quite
forsake.

And if to those Egyptian wizards old
(Which in star-read⁹ were wont have best in-
sight)

Faith may be given, it is by them told
That since the time they first took the sun's
height,

Four times his place he shifted hath in sight,
And twice hath risen where he now doth west,
And wested twice where he ought rise aright.
But most is Mars amiss of all the rest ;
And next to him old Saturn, that was wont be
best.

For during Saturn's ancient reign it's said
That all the world with goodness did abound ;
All lov'd virtue, no man was afraid
Of force, nor fraud in wight was to be found ;
No war was known, no dreadful trumpet's
sound ;

Peace universal reign'd 'mongst men and beasts :
And all things freely grew out of the ground :
Justice sat high ador'd with solemn feasts,
And to all people did divide her dread behests :¹⁰

Most sacred Virtue she of all the rest,
Resembling God in his imperial might ;
Whose sov'reign pow'r is herein most exprest,
That both to good and bad he dealeth right,
And all his works with justice hath bedight.¹¹
That power he also doth to princes lend,
And makes them like himself in glorious sight,
To sit in his own seat, his cause to end,
And rule his people right, as he doth recommend.
Dread sov'reign Goddess,¹² that dost highest sit
In seat of judgment in th' Almighty's stead,

⁷ See note 5, page 438.

⁸ This refers to the diminution of the obliquity of the ecliptic, by which the sun recedes from the pole, and approaches the equator.

⁹ Knowledge or reading of the stars.

¹⁰ Commands, decrees. ¹¹ Adorned. ¹² Elizabeth.

And with magnific might and wondrous wit
Dost to thy people righteous doom aread,¹
That farthest nations fill with awful dread,
Pardon the boldness of thy basest thrall,
That dare discourse of so divine a read²
As thy great justice praised over all;
The instrument whereof, lo! here thy Artegall.³

CANTO I.

*Artegall, train'd in Justice' lore;
Irena's quest pursued;
He doth avenge on Sanglier
His lady's blood embred.*

THOUGH virtue were held in highest price in the old times of which the poet treats, yet, he says, the seeds of vice sprang and grew great, beating with their boughs the gentle plants. "But evermore some of the virtuous race rose up, inspir'd with heroic heat," and cropped the base branches. Such first was Bacchus, who established right in the East, before his time untamed; and next, Hercules, in the West, subdued monstrous tyrants with the club of justice. Such also was "the champion of true justice, Artegall;" who, when he quitted Britomart (as told at the end of canto vi., book iv.), went forth to succour a distressed dame, unjustly held in bondage by a strong tyrant named Grantorto,⁴ who withheld her from her heritage. Irena,⁵ the dame in question, had besought redress from the Faery Queen; and Gloriana had entrusted the task to Artegall, "for that to her he seem'd best skill'd in righteous lore." He had been brought up in justice from his infancy, and taught "all the depth of rightful doom" by Astræa while she dwelt on earth. She had taken him from among his youthful peers, and nursed and trained him "in a cave from company exil'd."

There she him taught to weigh both right and wrong

In equal balance with due recompense,
And equity to measure out along
According to the line of conscience,
Whenso it needs with rigour to dispense:
Of all the which, for want there of mankind,
She caus'd him to make experience

¹ Judgment declare.

² Theme.

³ Artegall (called Arthegall, by the original editions, in the earlier books of the poem) is understood to represent Arthur, Lord Grey of Wilton, who was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland for two years from July 1580. Spenser was his secretary; and the events in Ireland during his government, which included the suppression of the rebellion of Earl Desmond, are shadowed forth in the present book. The name of the hero is obviously compounded of "Arthur," and "egal," equal or just.

⁴ Great Wrong.

⁵ Ireland; anciently called Ierné, modern Irish, Erin.

⁶ Judging.

⁷ Command, will.

⁸ Unknown.

⁹ Reached.

¹⁰ Avenging.

¹¹ Golden-sword.

Upon wild beasts, which she in woods did find
With wrongful pow'r oppressing others of their kind.

Thus she him trained, and thus she him taught
In all the skill of deeming⁶ wrong and right,
Until the ripeness of man's years he raught;⁷
That ev'n wild beasts did fear his awful sight,
And men admir'd his over-ruling might;
Nor any liv'd on ground that durst withstand
His dreadful hest,⁸ much less him match in fight,
Or bide the horror of his wreakful⁹ hand,
Whenso he list in wrath lift up his steely brand:

Which steely brand, to make him dreaded more,
She gave unto him, gotten by her sleight
And earnest search, where it was kept in store
In Jove's eternal house, unwist¹⁰ of wight,
Since he himself it us'd in that great fight
Against the Titans, that whilom rebell'd
'Gainst highest heav'n; Chrysaor¹¹ it was hight;
Chrysaor, that all other swords excell'd,
Well prov'd in that same day when Jove those
giants quell'd:

For of most perfect metal it was made,
Temper'd with adamant amongst the same,
And garnish'd all with gold upon the blade
In goodly wise, whereof it took its name;
And was of no less virtue than of fame:
For there no substance was so firm and hard,
But it would pierce or cleave whereso it came;
Nor any armour could its dint out ward;¹²
But wheresoever it did light, it throughly
shar'd.¹³

Now when the world with sin gan to abound,
Astræa, loathing longer here to space¹⁴
'Mongst wicked men, in whom no truth she
found,

Return'd to heaven, whence she deriv'd her race;
Where she hath now an everlasting place
'Mongst those twelve signs, which nightly we do
see

The heav'n's' bright-shining baldric¹⁵ to en-
chase;¹⁶

And is the Virgin, sixth in her degree,¹⁷
And next herself her righteous Balance¹⁸ hang-
ing be.

But when she parted hence she left her groom,¹⁹
An Iron Man, which did on her attend
Always to execute her steadfast doom,
And willed him with Artegall to wend,²⁰
And do whatever thing he did intend:
His name was Talus,²¹ made of iron mould,
Immovable, resistless, without end;

¹² Keep out.

¹³ Sheared, cleaved.

¹⁴ Dwell, roam.

¹⁵ Belt; the Milky Way.

¹⁶ Adorn.

¹⁷ Reckoning from March, in which month the year at Spenser's day began, August—the month in which the sun enters Virgo—was the sixth.

¹⁸ The sign Libra, following Virgo in the Zodiac.

¹⁹ Servant.

²⁰ Go.

²¹ Talos, in the ancient mythology, was a brazen man given by Vulcan to Minos, king of Crete; he protected the island by walking round it thrice daily. Spenser has modified the fable, making Talus the personification of the inflexible and un pitying power that must accompany Justice.

Who in his hand an iron flail did hold,
With which he thresh'd out falsehood, and did
truth unfold.

Talus attended Artegall on his enterprise; and the twain were on their way, when they descried a squire in squalid garb, weeping and lamenting bitterly. Approaching, they saw a headless lady lie beside him, wallowing in her blood; and Artegall, flaming with zeal of vengeance, asked who had so cruelly treated the lady. The sad squire said that the malefactor was a knight, who, accompanied by the now headless dame, had come upon him as he sat in solace with a fair love whose loss he deplored. The knight insisted on exchanging ladies; and, throwing down his own dame from his courser, took up on his steed the squire's love, to bear her away by force. But his own lady followed him, entreating him not to forsake her, but rather to slay her; and he, wrathfully drawing his sword, "at one stroke cropp'd off her head with scorn," and rode away. He had "pricked over yonder plain;" and in his shield he bore "a broken sword within a bloody field." Artegall instantly sent his iron page after the profligate and cruel knight (supposed to indicate Shan O'Neal, leader of the Irish rebellion of 1567, who was conspicuous for his profligacy); and soon Talus, who was "swift as swallow in her flight, and strong as lion in his lordly might," overtook and brought back to his master the knight—who was called Sir Sanglier—and the lady whom he had carried off. Artegall gently asked the captive what had taken place between him and the squire; but Sir Sanglier sternly and proudly answered, that he was guiltless, for he had not shed the lady's blood, nor taken away the squire's love, "but his own proper good." Knowing himself too weak to meet the knight's defiance in the field, the squire rather chose to confess himself guilty; but Artegall plainly perceived the truth, and contrived a method of getting at the facts. Exacting a promise that they would abide by his judgment, he proposed that the living and the dead lady should be divided between the knight and the squire in equal shares; and that whosoever dissented from his judgment should bear for twelve months the lady's head, "to witness to the world that she by him is dead."

Well pleas'd with that doom was Sanglier,
And offer'd straight the lady to be slain:
But that same squire, to whom she was more
dear,

When as he saw she should be cut in twain,
Did yield she rather should with him remain
Alive, than to himself be shar'd dead;
And, rather than his love should suffer pain,
He chose with shame to bear that lady's head:
True love despiseth shame when life is call'd in
dread.¹

Whom when so willing Artegall perceiv'd,

¹ Placed in doubt.
² Disgrace.

³ Took by force.

"Not so, thou Squire," he said; "but thine I
deem

The living lady, which from thee he reav'd:²
For worthy thou of her dost rightly seem.
And you, Sir Knight, that love so light esteem
As that ye would for little leave the same,
Take here your own, that doth you best beseem,
And with it bear the burden of defame;³
Your own dead lady's head, to tell abroad your
shame."

But Sanglier disdain'd much his doom,
And sternly gan repine at his behest;⁴
Nor would for aught obey, as did become,
To bear that lady's head before his breast;
Until that Talus had his pride repress,
And forc'd him, malgré,⁵ it up to rear.
Who when he saw it bootless to resist,
He took it up, and thence with him did bear;
As rated spaniel takes his burden up for fear.

The squire, much admiring the great justice
of Artegall, offered him perpetual service; but
the Knight would have no attendant save Talus;
with whom he passed on his way—"they two
enough t' encounter a whole regiment."

CANTO II.

*Artegall hears of Florimell;
Does with the Pagan fight:
Him slays; drowns Lady Munera;
Does raze her castle quite.*

As he journeyed, Artegall met Dony, the dwarf
of Florimell, hasting to the wedding-feast, which
was to take place in three days at the Castle of
the Strand—but fearful lest his progress should
be arrested "a little there beyond" by a cursed
cruel Saracen, who kept the passage of a bridge
by the strong hand, and had there brought to
ruin many errant knights. He was "a man of
great defence, expert in battle and in deeds of
arms;" and all the more emboldened by the
wicked charms with which his daughter aided
him. He had gained great property by his ex-
tortions, and daily increased his wrongs, letting
none go by, rich or poor, that did not pay his
passage-penny. To poll and pill the poor, he
kept "a groom of evil guise, whose scalp is
bare, that bondage doth bewray;" but he him-
self tyrannised over the rich. His name was
Pollenté; and he was accustomed to fight on a
narrow bridge, exceeding long, and full of trap-
doors, through which riders often fell. Beneath
the bridge ran a swift and deep river, in which,
through practice, he could easily manage his
steed, and overthrow the confused enemy; then
he took the victims' spoil at will, and brought it
to his daughter Munera, who dwelt at hand.
Not only was she surprisingly rich with his gifts
won by wrong; but, Dony adds,

⁴ Rebel against his command.
⁵ Against his will.

"Thereto¹ she is full fair, and rich attir'd,
With golden hands and silver feet beside,
That many lords have her to wife desir'd ;
But she them all despiseth for great pride."
"Now by my life," said he,² "and God to guide,
None other way will I this day betake,
But by that bridge where as he doth abide :
Therefore me thither lead." No more he spake,
But thitherward forthright his ready way did
make.

Unto the place he came within a while,
Where on the bridge he ready arm'd saw
The Saracen, awaiting for some spoil :
Who as they to the passage gan to draw,
A villain to them came with skull all raw,³
That passage-money did of them require,
According to the custom of their law :
To whom he answer'd wroth, "Lo ! there thy
hire ;"
And with that word him struck, that straight he
did expire.

The Pagan thereat waxed wroth, and addressed
himself to fight ; Artégall was not behind ; and
as they met in combat on the bridge, a trap
gave way, and both were soon struggling in the
flood.

As when a dolphin and a seal are met
In the wide champaign of the ocean plain,
With cruel chafe their courages they whet,
The masterdom of each by force to gain,
And dreadful battle 'twixt them do darrain ;⁴
They snuff, they snort, they bounce, they rage,
they roar,
That all the sea, disturb'd with their train,
Doth fry with foam above the surges hoar :
Such was betwixt these two the troublesome
uproar.

The Saracen, forced to quit his horse's back,
found Artégall a match for him as a swimmer,
and better breathed—so that he became irre-
sistible, and struck off Pollenté's head just as
he began to raise it a little above the brink to
tread upon the land. His body was carried
down the stream ; but Artégall, for a warning
to all mighty men not to abuse their power to
the oppression of the feeble, pitched the blas-
phemous head upon a pole, where it remained
many years. Then he turned against the castle,
where he was met by blasphemies and showers
of stones, so that he was forced to commit to
Talus the task of its reduction.

Eftsoons his page drew to the castle gate,
And with his iron flail at it let fly,
That all the warders it did sore amate,⁵
The which erewhile spake so reproachfully,
And made them stoop, that look'd erst so high.
Yet still he beat and bounc'd upon the door,
And thunder'd strokes thereon so hideously,
That all the piece⁶ he shak'd from the floor,
And fill'd all the house with fear and great
uproar.

¹ Besides, in addition.
³ Bare.

² Artégall.

With noise whereof the lady forth appear'd
Upon the castle wall ; and when she saw
The dangerous state in which she stood, she
fear'd

The sad effect of her near overthrow ;
And gan entreat that Iron Man below
To cease his outrage, and him fair besought ;
Since neither force of stones which they did
throw,
Nor pow'r of charms which she against him
wrought,
Might otherwise prevail, or make him cease for
aught.

But, when as yet she saw him to proceed
Unmov'd with prayers or with piteous thought,
She meant him to corrupt with goodly meed ;
And caus'd great sacks, with endless riches
fraught,
Unto the battlement to be upbrought,
And pour'd forth over the castle wall,
That she might win some time, though dearly
bought,
Whilst he to gath'ring of the gold did fall ;
But he was nothing mov'd nor tempted there-
withal :

He continued to "lay on load" with his huge
iron flail, till he broke open the gate for his
master's entrance. All fled and hid for fear ;
Talus, after long search, found Munera concealed
under a heap of gold, and dragged her out by the
hair ; then remorselessly he cut off her hands of
gold and feet of silver, "which sought unright-
eousness, and justice sold." Finally, he threw
her over the wall into the flood ; poured after her
all her wealth, after it had been burnt to ashes ;
razed the castle ; and defaced all its hewn stones,
that it might never be rebuilt. Then Artégall
undid the evil fashion, reformed the wicked
custom of the bridge, and pursued his former
journey. Drawing nigh to the sea, they saw
before them, far as they could view, a vast crowd
of people ; and, wondering at the great assembly,
they drew near to learn its cause and object.

There they beheld a mighty giant stand
Upon a rock, and holding forth on high
A huge great pair of balance in his hand,
With which he boasted in his surquedry⁷
That all the world he would weigh equally,
If aught he had the same to counterpoise :
For want whereof he weigh'd vanity,
And fill'd his balance full of idle toys :
Yet was admir'd much of fools, women, and
boys.

He said that he would all the earth uptake,
And all the sea, divided each from either :
So would he of the fire one balance make,
And one of th' air, without or wind or weather :
Then would he balance heav'n and hell together,
And all that did within them all contain ;
Of all whose weight he would not miss a feather :
And look what surplus did of each remain,
He would to his own part restore the same again.

⁶ Wage.
⁸ Building.

⁵ Terrify.
⁷ Presumption.

For why, he said, they all unequal were,
And had encroach'd upon other's share ;
Like as the sea (which plain he show'd there)
Had worn the earth ; so did the fire the air ;
So all the rest did others' parts impair :
And so were realms and nations run awry.
All which he undertook for to repair,
In sort as they were form'd anciently ;
And all things would reduce unto equality.

Therefore the vulgar did about him flock,
And cluster thick unto his leasings¹ vain,
Like foolish flies about a honey-crock,
In hope by him great benefit to gain,
And uncontroll'd freedom to obtain.
All which when Artegall did see and hear,
How he mislead the simple people's train,
In disdainful² wise he drew unto him near,
And thus unto him spake, without regard or fear ;

"Thou, that presum'st to weigh the world anew,
And all things to an equal to restore,
Instead of right me seems great wrong dost shew,
And far above thy force's pitch to soar :
For, ere thou limit what is less or more
In ev'ry thing, thou oughtest first to know
What was the poise³ of ev'ry part of yore :
And look, then, how much it doth overflow
Or fail thereof, so much is more than just to
trow.⁴

"For at the first they all created were
In goodly measure⁵ by their Maker's might ;
And weigh'd out in balances so near,
That not a dram was missing of their right :
The earth was in the middle centre pight,⁶
In which it doth immovable abide,
Hemm'd in with waters like a wall in sight,
And they with air, that not a drop can slide :
All which the heav'n's contain, and in their
courses guide.

"Such heav'nly justice doth among them reign,
That ev'ry one do know their certain bound ;
In which they do these many years remain,
And 'mongst them all no change hath yet been
found :

But if thou now shouldst weigh them new in
pound,⁷

We are not sure they would so long remain :
All change is perilous, and all chance unsound.
Therefore leave off to weigh them all again,
Till we may be assur'd they shall their course
retain."

"Thou foolish Elf," said then the giant wroth,
"Seest not how badly all things present be,
And each estate quite out of order go'th ?
The sea itself dost thou not plainly see
Encroach upon the land there under thee ?
And th' earth itself how daily it's increast
By all that, dying, to it turn'd be ?
Were it not good that wrong were then sur-
ceast,⁸
And from the most that some were given to the
least ?

¹ Falsehoods.² Weight, proportion.³ Disdainful.⁴ Believe.

"Therefore I will throw down these mountains
high,
And make them level with the lowly plain ;
These tow'ring rocks, which reach unto the sky,
I will thrust down into the deepest main,
And, as they were, them equalise again.
Tyrants, that make men subject to their law,
I will suppress, that they no more may reign ;
And lordlings curb that commons overawe ;
And all the wealth of rich men to the poor will
draw."

"Of things unseen how canst thou deem aright,"
Then answer'd the righteous Artegall,
"Since thou misdeem'st so much of things in
sight ?

What though the sea with waves continual
Do eat the earth, it is no more at all ;
Nor is the earth the less, or loseth aught :
For whatsoever from one place doth fall
Is with the tide unto another brought :
For there is nothing lost, that may be found if
sought.

"Likewise the earth is not augmented more
By all that, dying, into it do fade ;
For of the earth they form'd were of yore :
However gay their blossom or their blade
Do flourish now, they into dust shall vade.⁹
What wrong then is it if that, when they die,
They turn to that whereof they first were
made ?

All in the power of their great Maker lie :
All creatures must obey the voice of the Most
High.

"They live, they die, like as He doth ordain,
Nor ever any asketh reason why.
The hills do not the lowly dales disdain ;
The dales do not the lofty hills envy.
He maketh kings to sit in sovereignty ;
He maketh subjects to their pow'r obey ;
He pulleth down, He setteth up on high ;
He gives to this, from that He takes away :
For all we have is His : what He list do, He
may.

"Whatever thing is done, by Him is done,
Nor any may His mighty will withstand ;
Nor any may His sov'reign power shun,
Nor loose that He hath bound with steadfast
band :

In vain therefore dost thou now take in hand
To call to count, or weigh His works anew,
Whose counsels' depth thou canst not under-
stand ;

Since of things subject to thy daily view
Thou dost not know the causes nor their courses
due.

"For take thy balance, if thou be so wise,
And weigh the wind that under heav'n doth
blow ;
Or weigh the light that in the east doth rise ;
Or weigh the thought that from man's mind
doth flow :

But if the weight of these thou canst not show,

⁵ Proportion.⁷ Anew in the balance.⁶ Placed.⁸ Ended.⁹ Go.

Weigh but one word which from thy lips doth fall :

For how canst thou those greater secrets know,
That dost not know the least thing of them all ?
Ill can he rule the great that cannot reach the small."

Therewith the giant much abash'd, said
That he of little things made reckoning light ;
Yet the least word that ever could be laid
Within his balance he could weigh aright.
"Which is," said he, "more heavy then in weight,

The right or wrong, the false or else the true ?"
He answer'd that he would try it straight :
So he the words into his balance threw ;
But straight the wing'd words out of his balance flew.

Wroth wax'd he then, and said that words were light,

Nor would within his balance well abide :
But he could justly weigh the wrong or right.
"Well then," said Artegall, "let it be tried :
First in one balance set the true aside."
He did so first, and then the false he laid
In th' other scale ; but still it down did slide,
And by no mean could in the weight be stay'd :
For by no means the false will with the truth be weigh'd.

"Now take the right likewise," said Artegale,
"And counterpoise the same with so much wrong."

So first the right he put into one scale ;
And then the giant strove with puissance strong
To fill the other scale with so much wrong :
But all the wrongs that he therein could lay
Might not it poise ; yet did he labour long,
And sweat, and chaf'd, and prov'd¹ ev'ry way :
Yet all the wrongs could not a little right down weigh.

Which when he saw, he greatly grew in rage,
And almost would his balances have broken :
But Artegall him fairly gan assuage,
And said, "Be not upon thy balance wroken ;²
For they do naught but right or wrong betoken ;
But in the mind the doom³ of right must be :
And so likewise of words the which be spoken,
The ear must be the balance, to decree
And judge whether with truth or falsehood they agree.

"But set the truth and set the right aside,
For they with wrong or falsehood will not fare,
And put two wrongs together to be tried,
Or else two falses,⁴ of each equal share,
And then together do them both compare :
For truth is one, and right is ever one."
So did he ; and then plain it did appear
Whether of them the greater were at one :⁵
But right sat in the midst of the beam alone.

¹ Tried. ² Revenged. ³ Judgment.
⁴ Falsehoods. ⁵ At once. ⁶ Increase.
⁷ Moderation, the medium. ⁸ Dislike.

But he the right from thence did thrust away ;
For it was not the right which he did seek :
But rather strove extremities to weigh ;
Th' one to diminish, th' other for to eke :⁶
For of the mean⁷ he greatly did misleake.⁸
Whom when so lewdly⁹ minded Talus found,
Approaching nigh unto him cheek by cheek
He shoulder'd him from off the higher ground,
And down the rock him throwing, in the sea him drown'd.

Like as a ship, whom cruel tempest drives
Upon a rock with horrible dismay,
Her shatter'd ribs in thousand pieces rives,
And, spoiling all her gears¹⁰ and goodly ray,¹¹
Does make herself misfortune's piteous prey :
So down the cliff the wretched giant tumbled ;
His batter'd balances in pieces lay,
His timber'd¹² bones all broken rudely rumbled :
So was the high-aspiring with huge ruin humbled.

That when the people, which had there about
Long waited, saw his sudden desolation,
They gan to gather in tumultuous rout,
And mutining to stir up civil faction
For certain loss of so great expectation :
For well they hop'd to have got great good
And wondrous riches by his innovation :
Therefore resolving to revenge his blood,
They rose in arms, and all in battle order stood.

Which lawless multitude him coming to
In warlike wise when Artegall did view,
He much was troubled, nor wist what to do ;
For loth he was his noble hands t' embrace
In the base blood of such a rascal crew ;
And otherwise, if that he should retire,
Hefear'd lest they with shame would him pursue :
Therefore he Talus to them sent t' inquire
The cause of their array, and truce for to desire.

But soon as they him nigh approaching spied,
They gan with all their weapons him assay,
And rudely struck at him on every side ;
Yet naught they could him hurt, nor aught dismay :

But when at them he with his flail gan lay,
He like a swarm of flies them overthrew :
Nor any of them durst come in his way,
But here and there before his presence flew,
And hid themselves in holes and bushes from his view ;

As when a falcon bath with nimble flight
Flown at a flush of ducks foreby¹³ the brook,
The trembling fowl, dismay'd with dreadful sight
Of death, the which them almost overtook,
Do hide themselves from her astonying¹⁴ look
Amongst the flags and covert round about.
When Talus saw they all the field forsook,
And none appear'd of all that rascal rout,
To Artegall he turn'd, and went with him throughout.

⁹ Wickedly. ¹⁰ Equipments.
¹¹ Array. ¹² Massive, like timber.
¹³ Near. ¹⁴ Confounding.

CANTO III.

*The spousals of fair Florimell,
Where tourney many knights:
There Braggadocio is uncar'd
In all the ladies' sights.*

"AFTER long storms and tempests overblown," the sun breaks forth; so must some blissful hours appear when Fortune has exhausted her spite; and so did Florimell experience, whose bridal feast was prepared in Faery Land, infinite great store of lords and ladies, and all the brave knights, resorting thither from every side. The splendid feast over, deeds of arms ensued; and Marinell issued forth with six knights, who undertook to maintain against all comers the peerless excellence of Florimell. Against them came all that chose to joust, "from ev'ry coast and country under sun;" but all the first day Marinell won the greatest praise; and also on the second day the trumpets proclaimed that Marinell had best deserved. On the third day, he still performed great deeds of valour; but, pressing too far among his enemies, his retreat was cut off, and he was made prisoner. Just then Artegall chanced to come into the tilt-yard, along with Braggadocio and the false Florimell, whom he had met on the way; and, learning what had befallen Marinell, he borrowed the boaster's shield, to be the better hid. Then, overtaking the crowd of knights who were leading Marinell away, Artegall rescued the captive, and, with his help, chased the captors utterly out of the field. The deliverer then restored to Braggadocio the borrowed shield; the judges rose; and all came into the open hall to hear the decision on that day's tourneying. Thither also came fair Florimell, to congratulate each knight on his prize of valour; and loud calls arose for the stranger knight, who should gain the garland of that day. Artegall came not forth; but instead came Braggadocio, "and did show his shield, which bore the sun broad blas'd in a golden field." The trumpets sounded his triumph thrice, and Florimell advanced to greet and thank him; but the boaster, with proud disdain, declared that what he had done that day he had done not for her, but for his own dear lady's sake—whom on his peril he undertook to excel both her and all others. Much confounded and ashamed by his uncourteous and vaunting words, the true Florimell turned aside. "Then forth he brought his snowy Florimell," whom Trompart had in keeping, covered with a veil; and all the crowd, amazed, cried that it was either Florimell, or one that excelled her in beauty.

Which when as Marinell beheld likewise,
He was therewith exceedingly dismay'd;¹
Nor wist he what to think, or to devise:
But, like as one whom fiends had made afraid,
He long astonish'd stood, nor aught he said,

¹ Disturbed, amazed.² Resemblance.³ Regard.⁴ Loose, worthless fellow.

Nor aught he did, but with fast fix'd eyes
He gaz'd still upon that snowy maid;
Whom ever as he did the more advise,²
The more to be true Florimell he did surmise.

As when two suns appear in th' azure sky,
Mounted in Phoebus' chariot fiery bright,
Both darting forth fair beams to each man's eye,
And both adorn'd with lamps of flaming light;
All that behold so strange prodigious sight,
Not knowing Nature's work, nor what to ween,
Are rapt with wonder and with rare affright:
So stood Sir Marinell when he had seen
The semblant³ of this false by his fair beauty's queen.

All which when Artegall, who all this while
Stood in the press close cover'd, well adviev'd,
And saw that boaster's pride and graceless guile,
He could no longer bear, but forth issued,
And unto all himself there open shew'd,
And to the boaster said; "Thou losel⁴ base,
That hast with borrow'd plumes thyself indued,
And others' worth with leasings⁵ dost deface,
When they are all restor'd thou shalt rest in disgrace.

"That shield, which thou dost bear, was it indeed

Which this day's honour sav'd to Marinell;
But not that arm, nor thou the man, I read,⁶
Which didst that service unto Florimell:
For proof, show forth thy sword, and let it tell
What strokes, what dreadful stowre,⁷ it stirr'd
this day:

Or show the wounds which unto thee befell;
Or show the sweat with which thou diddest
sway

So sharp a battle, that so many did dismay.

"But this the sword which wrought those cruel
stounds,⁸

And this the arm the which that shield did bear,
And these the signs" (so show'd forth his
wounds),

"By which that glory gotten doth appear.
As for this lady, which he showeth here,
Is not (I wager) Florimell at all;
But some fair franion,⁹ fit for such a fere,¹⁰
That by misfortune in his hand did fall."
For proof whereof he bade them Florimell forth
call.

So forth the noble lady was y-brought,
Adorn'd with honour and all comely grace:
Whereto her bashful shamefastness y-wrought
A great increase in her fair blushing face;
As roses did with lilies interlace:
For of those words, the which that boaster
threw,

She inly yet conceiv'd great disgrace:
Whom when as all the people such did view,
They shouted loud, and signs of gladness all did
shew.

Then did he set her by that snowy one,
Like the true saint beside the image set;

⁵ Falsehoods.⁶ Blows.⁷ Declare.⁸ Loose woman.⁹ Conflict.¹⁰ Companion.

Of both their beauties to make paragon¹
 And trial, whether should the honour get.
 Straightway, so soon as both together met,
 Th' enchanted damsel vanish'd into naught :
 Her snowy substance melted as with heat,
 Nor of that goodly hue² remain'd aught
 But th' empty girdle which about her waist was
 wrought.

As when the daughter of Thaumantes fair³
 Hath in a watery cloud display'd wide
 Her goodly bow, which paints the liquid air,
 That all men wonder at her colours' pride ;
 All suddenly, ere one can look aside,
 The glorious picture vanisheth away,
 Nor any token doth thereof abide :
 So did this lady's goodly form decay,
 And into nothing go, ere one could it bewray.

All were stricken with great astonishment ;
 and Braggadocio himself, for grief and despair,
 stood "like a living corpse, immoveable."

But Artegall that golden belt uptook,
 The which of all her spoil was only left ;
 Which was not hers, as many it mistook,
 But Florimell's own girdle, from her reft
 While she was flying, like a weary weft,⁴
 From that foul monster which did her compel
 To perils great ; which he unbuckling eft⁵
 Presented to the fairest Florimell ;
 Who round about her tender waist it fitted well.

Full many ladies often had assay'd
 About their middles that fair belt to knit ;
 And many a one suppos'd to be a maid :
 Yet it to none of all their loins would fit,
 Till Florimell about her fasten'd it.
 Such power it had, that to no woman's waist
 By any skill or labour it would fit,
 Unless that she were continent and chaste ;
 But it would loose or break, that many had
 disgrac'd.

Now came forth Sir Guyon from the press, to
 claim his own good steed, which the braggart
 had stolen when its owner left it to go to the
 relief of Amavia (see canto i., book ii.) ; and
 after "great hurly-burly" in the hall had been
 appeased by Artegall, the Knight of Temper-
 ance related the circumstances under which
 he had lost the horse, and vainly challenged the
 cowardly thief to combat. Artegall—though
 pronouncing that Braggadocio's refusal to fight
 was sufficient proof that he was in the wrong—
 asked Guyon what privy tokens the steed bore ;
 and he answered that "within his mouth a
 black spot doth appear, shap'd like a horse's
 shoe, who list to seek it there."

Whereof to make due trial one did take
 The horse in hand, within his mouth to look :

¹ Comparison.

² Iris, or the rainbow ; the daughter of Thaumates.

³ Waif.

⁴ Hear.

⁵ Banded.

⁶ Form, aspect.

⁷ Quickly.

⁸ Seized.

But with his heels so sorely he him strake,
 That all his ribs he quite in pieces broke,
 That never word from that day forth he spoke.
 Another, that would seem to have more wit,
 Him by the bright embroider'd headstall took :
 But by the shoulder him so sore he bit,
 That he him maim'd quite, and all his shoulder
 split.

Nor he his mouth would open unto wight,
 Until that Guyon's self unto him spake,
 And call'd Brigadore (so was he hight) ;
 Whose voice so soon as he did undertake,⁹
 Eftsoons he stood as still as any stake,
 And suffer'd all his secret mark to see ;
 And, when as he him nam'd, for joy he brake
 His bands, and follow'd him with gladful glee,
 And frisk'd, and flung aloft, and louted⁷ low on
 knee.

Artegall therefore adjudged the steed to
 Guyon, and told the braggart to fare on foot
 till he had gained a horse. Braggadocio, how-
 ever, foully reviled the judge and disdained his
 judgment ; and Artegall was about to draw
 sword upon him, when Guyon restrained the
 Knight with the reflection that it would ill
 become the judge of their equity to wreak his
 wrath on such a churl, whose open shame was
 his sufficient punishment.

So did he mitigate Sir Artegall ;
 But Talus by the back the boaster hent,⁸
 And, drawing him out of the open hall,
 Upon him did inflict this punishment :
 First he his beard did shave, and foully shent ;⁹
 Then from him reft his shield, and it reverst,
 And blotted out his arms with falsehood blent ;¹⁰
 And himself baffled,¹¹ and his arms unherst ;¹²
 And broke his sword in twain, and all his armour
 sperst.¹³

The while his guileful groom¹⁴ was fled away ;
 But vain it was to think from him to fly :
 Who overtaking him did disarray,
 And all his face deform'd with infamy,
 And out of court him scourg'd openly.
 So ought all faitours,¹⁵ that true knighthood
 shame,
 And arms dishonour with base villainy,
 From all brave knights be banish'd with de-
 fame :¹⁶
 For oft their lewdness¹⁷ blotteth good deserts
 with blame.

Much mirth arose over the unmasking of these
 counterfeits ; and the poet leaves all the com-
 pany in pleasure and repast—"taking usury of
 time forepast" with all rare delights—to follow
 Artegall.

⁹ Disgraced.

¹⁰ Treated with ignominy.

¹¹ Scattered.

¹² Deceivers.

¹³ Wickedness.

¹⁴ Stained.

¹⁵ Defaced.

¹⁶ Trompart.

¹⁷ Infamy.

CANTO IV.

*Artegall dealeth right betwixt
Two brethren that do strive :
Saves Terpine from the gallows tree,
And doth from death reprove.*

SETTING out with some reflections on the necessity that whoso would divide true justice to the people should have mighty hands to fulfil the judgment he has given—"for Power is the right hand of Justice truly hight"—the poet resumes the story of Artegall's adventure. Quitting the Castle of the Strand, attended by Talus only, he encountered on the sea-shore two comely squires, brothers, who strove together; and by them stood two seemly damsels, seeking, now by fair words and now by threats, to assuage their ire. Between them, seeming to be the object of their strife, "stood a coffer strong fast bound on ev'ry side with iron bands," that had suffered much injury either by being wrecked upon the sands, or by being carried far from foreign lands. The squires were ready for the combat, with sword in hand, when Artegall arrived, and inquired the cause of strife. The elder replied that their father, Milesio, had equally divided his lands between himself and a younger brother—two islands not far off, one of which was now "but like a little mount of small degree," the sea having washed away the most of the elder brother's, and thrown it up to the younger's share. The elder had before that time loved "that farther maid, hight Philtera the fair," who had a goodly dower; while the younger, Amidas, loved the other damsel, Lucy bright, who had but little wealth. But Philtera, seeing the lands of Bracidas (the elder brother) decay, eloped to Amidas, who received her and left his own love to go astray. Lucy, in despair, threw herself into the sea; and as she wavered between life and death, having half seen the ugly visage of the latter, but not relishing the sight, she lighted upon the coffer, and, catching hold of it, at last came ashore on the diminished island of Bracidas—to whom, in recompense for her salvation, she presented the coffer, "together with herself in dowry free." But Philtera claimed the coffer, and the treasure which it contained, as her property, lost by shipwreck on the way to her new husband; while Bracidas declared his intention to hold his own—for though his brother had won away his land, and then his love, he should not likewise make a prey of his good luck. Amidas maintained that Philtera's claim to the coffer could be proved "by good marks and perfect good espial;" but both brothers agreed to accept Artegall's decision, and laid their swords under his foot.

Then Artegall thus to the younger said:
"Now tell me, Amidas, if that ye may,
Your brother's land, the which the sea hath laid
Unto your part, and pluck'd from his away,

¹ Called, declared.

By what good right do you withhold this day?"
"What other right," quoth he, "should you
esteem,
But that the sea it to my share did lay?"
"Your right is good," said he, "and so I deem
That what the sea unto you sent your own
should seem."

Then turning to the elder, thus he said:
"Now, Bracidas, let this likewise be shown;
Your brother's treasure, which from him is
stray'd,
Being the dowry of his wife well known,
By what right do you claim to be your own?"
"What other right," quoth he, "should you
esteem,
But that the sea hath it unto me thrown?"
"Your right is good," said he, "and so I deem
That what the sea unto you sent your own
should seem."

"For equal right in equal things doth stand:
For what the mighty sea hath once possess'd,
And pluck'd quite from all possessors' hand,
Whether by rage of waves that never rest,
Or else by wreck that wretches hath distrest,
He may dispose by his imperial might,
As thing at random left, to whom he list.
So, Amidas, the land was yours first hight;¹
And so the treasure yours is, Bracidas, by right."

"So was their discord by this doom appeas'd,
and each one had his right." Prosecuting his journey, Artegall espied "a rout of many people far away," whom, on drawing near, he found to be a troop of armed women, leading along, amid taunts and reproaches, a knight with both his hands pinioned behind him, and a halter round his neck, groaning inwardly that he should die so base a death at women's hands. The Amazons would have laid hands on Artegall also; but he drew back, and, ashamed to raise his own mighty hand against womankind, sent Talus to disperse the crowd with a few blows of his flail. They left behind them their captive—whom, brought to him by Talus, Artegall recognised as Sir Terpine, and interrogated as to the cause of his disgraceful plight. Much ashamed and confounded, Terpine laid the blame on fate, and continued:

"Being desirous (as all knights are wont)
Through hard adventures deeds of arms to try,
And after fame and honour for to hunt,
I heard report that far abroad did fly,
That a proud Amazon did late defy
All the brave knights that hold of Maidenhead,
And unto them wrought all the villainy
That she could forge in her malicious head,
Which some hath put to shame, and many done
be dead.²

"The cause, they say, of this her cruel hate,
Is for the sake of Bellodant the bold,
To whom she bore most fervent love of late,
And woo'd him by all the ways she co'd:
But, when she saw at last that he not wo'd
For aught or naught be won unto her will,

² Slain.

She turn'd her love to hatred manifold,
And for his sake vow'd to do all the ill
Which she could do to knights ; which now she
doth fulfil.

"For all those knights, the which by force or
guile

She doth subdue, she foully doth entreat :
First, she doth them of warlike arms despoil,
And clothe in women's weeds ; and then with
threat

Doth them compel to work, to earn their meat,
To spin, to card, to sew, to wash, to wring ;
Nor doth she give them other thing to eat
But bread and water or like feeble thing ;
Them to disable from revenge adventuring.

"But if, through stout disdain of manly mind,
Any her proud observance will withstand,
Upon that gibbet, which is there behind,
She causeth them be hang'd up out of hand ;
In which condition I right now did stand :
For, being overcome by her in fight,
And put to that base service of her band,
I rather chose to die, in life's despite,¹
Than lead that shameful life, unworthy of a
knight."

The name of that Amazonian queen is Radi-
gund, "in arms well tried and sundry battles." Ar-
tegal, vowing that he will not rest till he
has tried her might, bids Sir Terpine throw
aside the badges of reproach which he wears,
and aid him in his enterprise. Soon they came
to the dwelling of the Amazon, "a goodly city
and a mighty one, the which, of her own name,
she call'd Radigone."

Where they arriving, by the watchmen were
Descri'd straight ; who all the city warn'd
How that three warlike persons did appear,
Of which the one him seem'd a knight all
arm'd,

And th' other two well likely to have harm'd.
Eftsoons the people all to harness ran,
And like a sort of bees in clusters swarm'd :
Ere long their queen herself, half like a man,
Came forth into the rout, and them t' array
began.

And now the knights, being arriv'd near,
Did beat upon the gates to enter in ;
And at the porter, scorning them so few,
Threw many threats, if they the town did win,
To tear his flesh in pieces for his sin :
Which when as Radigund their coming heard,
Her heart for rage did grate, and teeth did
grin :²

She bade that straight the gates should be un-
barr'd,
And to them way to make with weapons well
prepar'd.

The knights pressed in, but were met by a
shower of arrows, which made them halt ; while
the enemy heaped strokes and hailed arrows on

them so thick that they could not abide. Radi-
gund, inflamed with fury to see the late captive
Terpine "so cruel dole among her maids divide,"
to avenge his shame, flew at him like a fell
lioness, and smote him senseless to the ground.

Soon as she saw him on the ground to grovel,
She lightly to him leap'd ; and, in his neck
Her proud foot setting, at his head did level,
Weening at once her wrath on him to wreak,
And his contempt, that did her judgment break
As when a bear hath seiz'd her cruel claws
Upon the carcase of some beast too weak,
Proudly stands over, and awhile doth pause
To hear the piteous beast pleading her plaintive
cause.

Whom when as Artegal in that distress
By chance beheld, he left the bloody slaughter
In which he swam, and ran to his redress :
There her assailing fiercely fresh he raught³ her
Such a huge stroke, that it of sense distraught⁴
her ;

And, had she not it warded warily,
It had depriv'd her mother of a daughter :
Nathless, for all the pow'r she did apply,
It made her stagger oft, and stare with ghastly
eye.

Like to an eagle in his kingly pride,
Soaring through his wide empire of the air
To weather his broad sails, by chance hath spied
A gohawk, which hath seiz'd for her share
Upon some fowl that should her feast prepare ;
With dreadful force he flies at her belive,⁵
That with his sounce,⁶ which none endure dare,
Her from the quarry he away doth drive,
And from her griping pounce the greedy prey
doth rive.

But, soon as she her sense recover'd had,
She fiercely toward him herself gan dight,⁷
Through vengeful wrath and disdainful⁸ pride
half mad ;

For never had she suffer'd such despite :
But, ere she could join hand with him to fight,
Her warlike maids about her flock'd so fast,
That they disparted them, maugré⁹ their might,
And with their troops did far asunder cast :
But 'mongst the rest the fight did until evening
last.

And ev'ry while that mighty Iron Man
With his strange weapon, never wont¹⁰ in war,
Them sorely vex'd, and cours'd, and overran,
And broke their bows, and did their shooting
mar,

That none of all the many once did dare
Him to assault, nor once approach him nigh ;
But, like a sort of sheep dispersed far,
For dread of their devouring enemy,
Through all the fields and valleys did before
him fly.

Night falling, Radigund gave the signal to
retire ; and all her people entered the city.
Artegal pitched his rich pavilion in open sight

¹ Contempt.

² Reached, dealt.

³ Immediately.

⁴ Grind.

⁵ Deprived.

⁶ Swoop.

⁷ Prepare.

⁸ Despite.

⁹ Disdainful.

¹⁰ Used.

before the gate, and rested, with Terpene ; while Talus kept watch. But Radigund, full of heart-gnawing grief at her defeat, tossed in her troubled mind how she might revenge herself. At last she called a trusty maid, named Clarin, or Clarinda, and sent her forth to challenge the Faery Knight to single combat on the morrow.

"But these conditions do to him propound ;
That, if I vanquish him, he shall obey
My law, and ever to my lore¹ be bound ;
And so will I, if me he vanquish may ;
Whatever he shall like to do or say :
Go straight, and take with thee to witness it
Six of thy fellows of the best array,
And bear with you both wine and junkets² fit,
And bid him eat : henceforth he oft shall hungry sit."

The challenge was duly delivered and accepted ; then Artegall betook himself to rest, "that he might fresher be against the next day's fight."

CANTO V.

*Artegall fights with Radigund,
And is subdu'd by guile :
He is by her imprison'd,
But wrought by Clarin's wile.*

So soon as Day, forth dawning from the east,
Night's humid curtain from the heav'ns withdrew,

And, early calling forth both man and beast,
Commanded them their daily works renew ;
These noble warriors, mindful to pursue
The last day's purpose of their vow'd fight,
Themselves thereto prepar'd in order due ;
The Knight, as best was seeming for a knight,
And th' Amazon, as best it lik'd herself to dight.³

All in a camis⁴ light of purple silk
Woven upon with silver, subtly wrought,
And quilted upon satin white as milk ;
Trail'd⁵ with ribands diversely distraught,⁶
Like as the workmen had their courses taught ;
Which was short tuck'd for light motion
Up to her ham ; but, when she list, it raught⁷
Down to her lowest heel ; and thereupon
She wore for her defence a mail'd habergeon.

And on her legs she painted buskins wore,
Basted⁸ with bands of gold on ev'ry side,
And mails between, and lac'd close before ;
Upon her thigh her scimitar was tied
With an embroider'd belt of mickle pride ;
And on her shoulder hung her shield, bedeckt
Upon the boss with stones that shin'd wide,
As the fair moon in her most full aspect ;
That to the moon it might be like in each respect.

So forth she came out of the city-gate,
With stately port and proud magnificence,
Guarded with many damsels, that did wait

Upon her person for her sure defence,
Playing on shalms and trumpets, that from hence
Their sound did reach unto the heaven's height :
So forth into the field she march'd thence,
Where was a rich pavilion ready pight⁹
Her to receive, till time they should begin the fight.

Artegall came forth out of his tent ; and when both combatants had entered, the lists were closed, "the trumpets sounded, and the field began." In a long and furious encounter, Artegall shears away half of Radigund's shield ; she wounds him in the thigh with her scimitar ; and he responds with two blows, the first shattering the remainder of her shield, the second, delivered upon her helmet, felling her to the ground in senseless swoon. Leaping to her with dreadful look, the Knight unlaces her helmet, intending to cut off her head.

But, when as he discover'd had her face,
He saw, his senses' strange astonishment,
A miracle of Nature's goodly grace
In her fair visage, void of ornament,
But bath'd in blood and sweat together ment ;¹⁰
Which, in the rudeness of that evil plight,
Bewray'd the signs of feature excellent :
Like as the moon, in foggy winter's night,
Doth seem to be herself, though darken'd be her light.

At sight thereof his cruel-minded heart
Empierc'd was with pitiful regard,
That his sharp sword he threw from him apart,
Cursing his hand that had that visage marr'd :
No hand so cruel, nor no heart so hard,
But ruth¹¹ of beauty will it mollify.
By this, upstarting from her swoon, she star'd
A while about her with confus'd eye ;
Like one that from his dream is wak'd suddenly.

Soon as the Knight she there by her did spy
Standing with empty hands all weaponless,
With fresh assault upon him she did fly,
And gan renew her former cruelty :
And though he still retir'd, yet nath'less
With huge redoubled stroke she on him laid ;
And more increas'd her outrage merciless
The more that he with meek entreaty pray'd
Her wrathful hand from greedy vengeance to have stay'd.

Like as a puttock,¹² having spied in sight
A gentle falcon sitting on a hill,
Whose other wing, now made unmeet for flight,
Was lately broken by some fortune ill ;
The foolish kite, led with licentious will,
Doth beat upon the gentle bird in vain,
With many idle stoops her troubling still :
Ev'n so did Radigund with bootless pain
Annoy this noble Knight, and sorely him constrain.

He is at last compelled to deliver up his shield,
and submit to the conditions of the contest—

¹ Instructions, commands.² Array.³ Adorned.⁴ Dainties.⁵ Dress of thin stuff.⁶ Disposed.⁷ Reached.⁸ Placed.⁹ Compassion.¹⁰ Sowed.¹¹ Mingled.¹² Kite.

for, though he had first won the victory, he had wilfully lost it by abandoning his weapon. Striking him with the flat of her sword, Radigund took him as her vassal; but Terpine she ordered to be hanged straightway; while Talus, thundering with his iron flail among those who sought to bar his path, made his escape—not once attempting to rescue his lord, but thinking it just to obey the conditions of the battle.

Then took the Amazon this noble Knight,
Left to her will by his own wilful blame,
And caus'd him to be disarm'd quite
Of all the ornaments of knightly name
With which whilom he gotten had great fame:
Instead whereof she made him to be dight¹
In woman's weeds, that is to manhood shame,
And put before his lap an apron white,
Instead of curiets and bases² fit for fight.

So being clad she brought him from the field,
In which he had been trained many a day,
Into a long large chamber, which was ceil'd
With monuments of many knights' decay,
By her subdu'd in victorious fray:
Amongst the which she caus'd his warlike arms
Be hang'd on high, that might his shame bewray;
And broke his sword, for fear of farther harms,
With which he went to stir up battailous alarms.

There enter'd in, he round about him saw
Many brave knights whose names right well he
knew,

There bound t' obey that Amazon's proud law,
Spinning and carding all in comely rew,³
That his big heart loath'd so uncomely view:
But they were forc'd, through penury and pine,
To do those works to them appointed due:
For naught was given them to sup or dine,
But what their hands could earn by twisting
linen twine.

Amongst them all she plac'd him most low,
And in his hand a distaff to him gave,
That he thereon should spin both flax and tow;
A sordid office for a mind so brave:
So hard it is to be a woman's slave!
Yet he took it in his own self's despite,
And thereto did himself right well behave
Her to obey, since he his faith had plight
Her vassal to become, if she him won in fight.

Who had him seen, imagine might thereby
That⁴ whilom hath of Hercules been told,
How for Iola's⁵ sake he did apply
His mighty hands the distaff vile to hold,
For his huge club, which had subdued of old
So many monsters which the world annoy'd;
His lion's skin chang'd to a pall⁶ of gold,
In which, forgetting wars, he only joy'd
In combats of sweet love, and with his mistress
toy'd.

Such is the cruelty of womenkind,
When they have shaken off the shamefast band
With which wise nature did them strongly bind
T' obey the heats of man's well-ruling hand,

¹ Dressed.

² Cuirass and armour for the legs.

³ Row.

⁴ That which.

That then all rule and reason they withstand,
To purchase a licentious liberty:
But virtuous women wisely understand
That they were born to base⁷ humility,
Unless the heav'n them lift to lawful sov'reignty.

Thus Artegall long continued to serve Radigund with due subjection; while the royal Amazon conceived love for her captive, and was tormented day and night by her anguish, which ever increased the more she strove against it. At last she began to stoop "to meek obeisance of Love's mighty reign;" and, calling secretly to her the handmaid whom she most did trust, told her that she must now test her friendship in greatest need.

With that she turn'd her head, as half abash'd,
To hide the blush which in her visage rose
And through her eyes like sudden lightning
flash'd,

Decking her cheek with a vermilion rose:
But soon she did her countenance compose,
And, to her turning, thus began again;

"This grief's deep wound I would to thee disclose,

Thereto compell'd through heart-murd'ring
pain;

But dread of shame my doubtful lips doth still
restrain."

Encouraged by the handmaid to say on and be bold, Radigund confesses that the Faery Knight has won her heart, and that she would fain "by his freedom get his free goodwill, yet so as bound to me he may continue still," by the bands of "sweet love and sure benevolence." The queen entreats Clarinda to try if she can win him any way, without discovering her mistress's mind;

"Which that thou may'st the better bring to
pass,

Lo! here this ring, which shall thy warrant be
And token true to old Eumenias,
From time to time, when thou it best shall see,
That in and out thou may'st have passage free.
Go now, Clarinda; well thy wits advise,
And all thy forces gather unto thee,
Armies of lovely looks, and speeches wise,
With which thou canst ev'n Jove himself to love
entice."

Clarinda comforted Radigund with sure promise of her best endeavour, and thenceforth sought by all the means she might to curry favour with the Elfin Knight; proving him with wide-glancing words, drawing dark pictures of his captive future, and kindling in his mind the thought of deliverance. Having led him to the admission that the man were unworthy of better day who did not take the offer of good hope, she spoke thus:

"Then why dost not, thou ill-advised man,
Make means to win thy liberty forlorn,⁸
And try if thou by fair entreaty can

⁵ Not Iola, but Omphale, is intended.

⁶ Cloak.

⁸ Lost.

⁷ Lowly.

Move Radigund? who though she still have
worn¹

Her days in war, yet (weet thou) was not born
Of bears and tigers, nor so savage minded
As that, all be² all love of men she scorn,
She yet forgets that she of men was kindred:³
And sooth oft seen that proudest hearts base
love hath blinded."

"Cartes, Clarinda, not of canker'd will,"
Said he, "nor obstinate disdainful mind,
I have forbore this duty to fulfil:
For well I may this ween, by that I find,
That she, a queen, and come of princely kind,
Both worthy is for to be sued unto,
Chiefly by him whose life her law doth bind,
And eke of pow'r her own doom to undo,
And als'⁴ of princely grace to be inclin'd thereto.

"But want of means hath been mine only let⁵
From seeking favour where it doth abound;
Which if I might by your good office get,
I to yourself should rest for ever bound,
And ready to deserve what grace I found."
She, feeling him thus bite upon the bait,
Yet doubting lest his hold was but unsound
And not well fasten'd, would not strike him
straight,

But drew him on with hope, fit leisure to await.

But, foolish maid, while heedless of the hook
She thus oft-times was beating off and on,
Through slippery footing fell into the brook,
And there was caught to her confusion:
For, seeking thus to salve⁶ the Amazon,
She wounded was with her deceit's own dart,
And gan thenceforth to cast affection,
Conceiv'd close in her beguil'd heart,
To Artégall, through pity of his causeless smart.

But she dared disclose to none "her fancy's
wound," and thought it best to await fit time,
meanwhile dissembling her sad thoughts' unrest.
One day Radigund asked her how her mission
was succeeding; and Clarinda, overcoming a
momentary confusion, began to tell what she
had done, and how she had found Artégall "ob-
stinate and stern," resolved to die in misery
rather than entertain his foe's love; "his reso-
lution was, both first and last, his body was
her thrall, his heart was freely plac'd." En-
raged "to be so scorn'd of a base-born thrall,
whose life did lie in her least eyelid's fall," Radi-
gund at first vowed to deprive him of life; but,
relenting her mood, she said that she would bear
awhile with his first folly, till Clarinda had
"tried again, and tempted him more near."

"Say and do all that may thereto prevail;
Leave naught unpromis'd that may him per-
suade;
Life, freedom, grace, and gifts of great avail,⁷
With which the gods themselves are milder
made:

Thereto add art, ev'n women's witty trade,
The art of mighty words, that men can charm;

With which in case thou canst him not invade,
Let him feel hardness of thy heavy arm:
Who will not stoop with good shall be made
stoop with harm.

"Some of his diet do from him withdraw;
For I him find to be too proudly fed:
Give him more labour, and with straiter law,
That he with work may be forwearied:⁸
Let him lodge hard, and lie in strawen bed,
That may pull down the courage of his pride;
And lay upon him, for his greater dread,
Cold iron chains with which let him be tied;
And let whatever he desires be him denied.

"When thou hast all this done, then bring me
news

Of his demean;⁹ thenceforth not like a lover,
But like a rebel stout, I will him use:
For I resolve this siege not to give over,
Till I the conquest of my will recover."
So she departed, full of grief and sdain,¹⁰
Which inly did to great impatience move her:
But the false maiden shortly turn'd again
Unto the prison, where her heart did thrall
remain.

There all her subtle nets she did unfold,
And all the engines of her wit display;
In which she meant him wareless¹¹ to enfold,
And of his innocence to make her prey.
So cunningly she wrought her craft's assay,
That both her Lady, and herself withal,
And eke the Knight, at once she did betray;
But most the Knight, whom she with guileful
call

Did cast¹² for to allure into her trap to fall.

As a bad nurse, which, feigning to receive
In her own mouth the food meant for her child,
Withholds it to herself, and doth deceive
The infant, so for want of nurture spoil'd;
Even so Clarinda her own Dame beguil'd,
And turn'd the trust, which was in her affied,¹³
To feeding of her private fire, which boil'd
Her inward breast, and in her entrails fried,
The more that she it sought to cover and to hide.

To the Knight she feigned that Radigund had
sternly met her earnest entreaties for his free-
dom, by commands to augment his misery and
load him with iron bands—which the handmaid
forebore to do, for love of him; and she pro-
mised, if she found favour in his eyes, to devise
how he might be enlarged out of prison. The
Knight, glad to gain his freedom, gave her
great thanks, and, "to feed the humour of her
malady," entertained her with promises that he
would by all good means deserve such grace.
So daily he showed her fair semblance, yet never
meaning to be untrue to his own absent love;
while Clarinda never found in her false heart
to unbind his bondage, ever telling Radigund
that he defied her love, and Artégall that "her
Dame his freedom did deny."

¹ Spent.

² Although.

³ Begotten.

⁴ Also.

⁵ Obstacle.

⁶ Heal.

⁷ Value.

⁸ Utterly wearied.

⁹ Demeanour.

¹⁰ Disdain.

¹¹ Unwary.

¹² Contrive.

¹³ Reposed.

Yet thus much friendship she to him did show,
That his scarce diet somewhat was amended,
And his work lessen'd, that his love might grow:
Yet to her Dame him still she discommended,
That she with him might be the more offended.
Thus he long while in thraldom there remain'd,
Of both belov'd well, but little friended;
Until his own true love his freedom gain'd:
Which in another canto will be best contain'd.

CANTO VI.

*Talus brings news to Britomart
Of Artegall's mishap:
She goes to seek him; Dolon meets,
Who seeks her to entrap.*

BRITOMART had waited for the return of her knight beyond the appointed term of three months, and now began "to cast in her mis-doubtful mind a thousand fears"—chiefly apprehensive "lest some new love had him from her possess." Spending her time in fears, and jealous fancies, and irresolute resolves to seek him out—finding ease nowhere—one day she came to a window that opened west, "towards which coast her love his way address." She "sent her wing'd thoughts more swift than wind to bear unto her love the message of her mind." Looking long, she spied one advancing with hasty speed; and soon she discerned that it was Talus, Artegall's squire. Filled at once with hope and dread, she met him in the door, and impatiently asked where was his lord. The Iron Man, although he wanted "sense and sorrow's feeling," did yet inly chill and quake with consciousness of his ill tidings, and stood mute, till again called upon to tell whatever news he had, or good or bad. Then he said that his lord, her love, by hard mishap did lie in wretched bondage, woefully bestead. "And is he vanquish'd by his tyrant enemy?" cried Britomart.

"Not by that tyrant, his intended foe;
But by a tyranness," he then replied,
"That him captiv'd hath in hapless woe."
"Cease, thou bad news-man; badly dost thou
hide

Thy master's shame, in harlot's bondage tied;
The rest myself too readily can spell."
With that in rage she turn'd from him aside,
Forcing in vain the rest to her to tell;
And to her chamber went like solitary cell.

There she began to make mournful plaint against her knight for being so untrue; blamed herself for yielding so easily to a stranger's love; and cast in her wrathful will how to revenge the blot of honour stained—"to fight with him, and goodly die her last." Now she walked and chafed; now she threw herself on her bed, and lamented, not loudly, as women wont, but with deep sighs and few sobs.

¹ Fierceness, fury.² Stained.

Like as a wayward child, whose sounder sleep
Is broken with some fearful dream's affright,
With froward will doth set himself to weep,
Nor can be still'd for all his nurse's might,
But kicks, and squalls, and shrieks for fell
despite;
Now scratching her, and her loose locks mis-
using,
Now seeking darkness, and now seeking light,
Then craving suck, and then the suck refusing:
Such was this lady's fit in her love's fond
accusing.

Having thus long afflicted herself in vain, she returned to Talus, and began to inquire of him in milder mood the certain cause of Artegall's detention. Informed that he lay in wretched thraldom, not compelled by strong hand, "but his own doom, that none can now undo," she declared anew that the story was "a thing compact" between master and squire to deceive her of faith plighted to her. But when Talus had told the whole story, she was distracted with grief and wrath, and, donning her armour and mounting her steed straightway, bade Talus guide her on.

So forth she rode upon her ready way,
To seek her knight, as Talus her did guide:
Sadly she rode, and never word did say,
Nor good nor bad, nor ever look'd aside,
But still right down; and in her thought did
hide

The fellness¹ of her heart, right fully bent
To fierce avengement of that woman's pride,
Which had her lord in her base prison pent,
And so great honour with so foul reproach had
blent.²

So as she thus malácholic did ride,
Chewing the cud of grief and inward pain,
She chanc'd to meet toward the eventide
A knight, that softly pac'd on the plain,
As if himself to solace he were fain;
Well shot³ in years he seem'd, and rather bent
To peace than needless trouble to constrain;
As well by view of that his vestiment,
As by his modest semblant,⁴ that no evil meant.

Gently saluting her, he strove to enter into conversation; but, her mind filled with one great thought, she was little disposed to talk of aught. Noticing her constrained manner, the stranger ceased to trouble her with speech, but besought her, "since shady damp had dimm'd the heaven's reach," to lodge with him that night. The championess consenting, they soon reached his dwelling, and were received and entertained in seemly wise. The time of rest being come, Britomart was taken to a chamber, where grooms waited to disarm her; but she refused to doff her armour, on the plea that she had vowed never to do so until she had taken vengeance upon a mortal foe for a late wrong. The host grew right discontent in mind, lest by the Maid's refusal he should miss his secret purpose; but he took leave of her, and departed,

³ Advanced.⁴ Appearance.

leaving Britomart restless, comfortless, and sleepless—reproving her eyes if they betrayed any inclination to close.

"Yeguilt eyes," said she, "the which with guile My heart at first betray'd, will ye betray My life now too, for which a little while Ye will not watch? false watches, well-away! I wot¹ when ye did watch both night and day Unto your loss; and now needs will ye sleep? Now ye have made my heart to wake alway, Now will ye sleep? ah! wake, and rather weep To think of your Knight's want, that should ye waking keep."

Thus did she watch, and wear the weary night In wailful plaints, that none was to appease; Now walking soft, now sitting still upright, As sundry change her seem'd best to ease. Nor less did Talus suffer sleep to seize His eyelids sad, but watch'd continually, Lying without her door in great disease;² Like to a spaniel waiting carefully Lest any should betray his lady treach'rously.

What time the native bellman of the night, The bird that warn'd Peter of his fall, First rings his silver bell t' each sleepy wight, That should their minds up to devotion call, She heard a wondrous noise below the hall: All suddenly the bed, where she should lie, By a false trap was let adown to fall Into a lower room, and by and by The loft³ was rais'd again, that no man could it spy.

Though much dismayed at the discovery that treason was meant, she kept her place with courage confident; and soon, hearing the sound of armed men coming towards her chamber, she caught up her sword and shield. Two armed knights, followed by a rascal crowd, appeared at the door; but Talus, espying them, sprang from the ground, and with his rude iron flail drove all the assailants to flight. Though wondrous wroth at the treason, and burning for revenge, Britomart had to abide till day in the place, but with careful guard against further guile. The goodman of the place, it appeared, was Dolon, "a man of subtil wit and wicked mind," that had in his youth been a knight, but had got little good and honour by warlike life; for he was nothing valorous, but undermined all noble knights with sly shifts and wiles. He had three sons, of whom one was named Guisor—the "groom of evil guise" who had helped Pollente to maintain the evil custom of the bridge, destroyed by Artegall. To avenge his son, Dolon and his surviving sons had entrapped Britomart—whom, from her attendant, Talus, they took for Artegall—and meant to have slain him; "but by God's grace, and her good heediness," she had escaped their wiles. At dawn next day, the vengeful Britomart sought Dolon and his sons throughout the house in vain; but, as she proceeded on her way, she encountered

the two false brethren on the bridge on which Pollente and Artegall had fought. "Strait was the passage, like a plough'd ridge, that, if two met, the one must needs fall o'er the ledge."

There they did think themselves on her to wreak Who as she nigh unto them drew, the one These vile reproaches gan unto her speak; "Thou recreant false traitor, that with loan⁴ Of arms hast knighthood stol'n, yet knight art none, No more shall now the darkness of the night Defend thee from the vengeance of thy fone:⁵ But with thy blood thou shalt appease the sprite Of Guisor, by thee slain, and murder'd by thy sleight."

Strange were the words in Britomart's ear; Yet stay'd she not for them, but forward far'd, Till to the perilous bridge she came; and there Talus desir'd that he might have prepar'd The way to her, and those two losels scar'd: But she thereat was wroth, that for despite The glancing sparkles through her beaver glar'd, And from her eyes did flash out fiery light, Like coals that through a silver censor sparkled bright.

She stay'd not to advise which way to take; But, putting spurs unto her fiery beast, Thorough the midst of them she way did make. The one of them, which most her wrath increast, Upon her spear she bore before her breast, Till to the bridge's farther end she past; Where falling down his challenge he releast: The other overside the bridge she cast Into the river, where he drunk his deadly last.

As when the flashing levin⁶ haps to light Upon two stubborn oaks, which stand so near That way betwixt them none appears in sight; The engine, fiercely flying forth, doth tear The one from th' earth, and through the air doth bear;

The other it with force doth overthrow Upon one side, and from his roots doth rear: So did the championess those two there strow, And to their sire their carcasses left to bestow.

CANTO VII.

*Britomart comes to Isis' church,⁷
Where she strange visions sees:
She fights with Radigund, her slays,
And Artegall thence frees.*

NAUGHT is on earth more sacred or divine, That gods and men do equally adore, Than this same virtue that doth right define:⁸ For th' heav'n's themselves, whence mortal men implore Right in their wrongs, are rul'd by righteous lore Of highest Jove, who doth true justice deal

¹ Know.
² Floor.

³ Uneasiness.
⁴ Borrowing.

⁵ Foes.
⁷ Temple.

⁶ Lightning.
⁸ Justice.

To his inferior gods, and evermore
Therewith contains¹ his heav'nly commonweal:
The skill whereof to princes' hearts he doth
reveal.

Well, therefore, did the antique world invent²
That Justice was a god of sov'reign grace,
And altars unto him and temples lent,
And heav'nly honours in the highest place;
Calling him great Osiris, of the race
Of th' old Egyptian kings that whilom were;
With feign'd colours shading³ a true case;
For that Osiris, whilst he lived here,
The justest man alive and truest did appear.

His wife was Isis; whom they likewise made
A goddess of great pow'r and sov'reignty,
And in her person cunningly did shade⁴
That part of Justice which is Equity,
Whereof I have to treat here presently:
Unto whose temple when as Britomart
Arriv'd, she with great humility
Did enter in, nor would that night depart;
But Talus might not be admitted to her part.⁵

There she receiv'd was in goodly wise
Of many priests, which duly did attend
Upon the rites and daily sacrifice,
All clad in linen robes⁶ with silver hemm'd;
And on their heads, with long locks comely
kem'd⁷

They wore rich mitres shap'd like the moon,
To show that Isis doth the moon portend;
Like as Osiris signifies the sun:
For that they both like⁸ race in equal justice
run.

The championess them greeting, as she co'ld,⁹
Was thence by them into the temple led;
Whose goodly building when she did behold
Borne upon stately pillars, all dispread
With shining gold, and arch'd over head,
She wonder'd at the workman's passing skill,
Whose like before she never saw nor read;
And thereupon long while stood gazing still,
But thought that she thereon could never gaze
her fill.

Thenceforth unto the idol they her brought;
The which was fram'd all of silver fine,
So well as could with cunning hand be wrought,
And cloth'd all in garments made of line,¹⁰
Hemm'd all about with fringe of silver twine:
Upon her head she wore a crown of gold,
To show that she had pow'r in things divine:
And at her feet a crocodile was roll'd,
That with her wreath'd tail her middle did
enfold.

One foot was set upon the crocodile,
And on the ground the other fast did stand;
So meaning to suppress both forg'd guile
And open force: and in her other hand
She stretch'd forth a long white slender wand.

¹ Controls. ² Feign, suppose.
³ Shadowing forth. ⁴ Represent.
⁵ That part to which she was admitted.
⁶ The Romans called Isis herself "linigera," because
her priests and servants wore linen garments.
⁷ Combed, kempt. ⁸ The same.
⁹ As she well could do.

Such was the goddess: whom when Britomart
Had long beheld, herself upon the land¹¹
She did prostrate, and with right humble heart
Unto herself her silent prayers did impart.

To which the idol, as it were inclining
Her wand, did move with amiable look,
By outward show her inward sense designing:¹²
Who, well perceiving how her wand she shook,
It as a token of good fortune took.
By this the day with damp was overcast,
And joyous light the house of Jove¹³ forsook:
Which when she saw, her helmet she unlac'd,
And by the altar's side herself to slumber plac'd.

For other beds the priests there us'd none,
But on their mother Earth's dear lap did lie,
And bask¹⁴ their sides upon the cold hard stone,
To inure themselves to sufferance thereby,
And proud rebellious flesh to mortify:
For, by the vow of their religion,
They ti'd were to steadfast chastity
And continence of life; that, all foregone,¹⁵
They might the better tend to their devotion.

Therefore they might not taste of fleshly food,
Nor feed on aught the which doth blood contain,
Nor drink of wine; for wine, they say, is blood,
Even the blood of giants, which were slain
By thund'ring Jove in the Phlegræan plain;¹⁶
For which the Earth (as they the story tell),
Wroth with the gods, which to perpetual pain
Had damn'd¹⁷ her sons which 'gainst them did
rebel,
With inward grief and malice did against them
swell:

And of their vital blood, the which was shed
Into her pregnant bosom, forth she brought
The fruitful vine; whose liquor bloody red,
Having the minds of men with fury fraught,
Might in them stir up old rebellious thought,
To make new war against the gods again:
Such is the pow'r of that same fruit, that
naught

The fell contagion may thereof restrain,
Nor within reason's rule her madding¹⁸ mood
contain.

There did the warlike maid herself repose,
Under the wings of Isis, all that night;
And with sweet rest her heavy eyes did close,
After that long day's toil and weary plight:
Where, whilst her earthly parts with soft delight
Of senseless sleep did deeply drown'd lie,
There did appear unto her heav'nly sprite
A wondrous vision, which did close imply¹⁹
The course of all her fortune and posterity.

Her seem'd, as she was doing sacrifice
To Isis, deck'd with mitre on her head,
And linen stole,²⁰ after those priestess' guise,²¹
All suddenly she saw transfigur'd

¹⁰ Linen. ¹² Signifying.
¹¹ Ground. ¹⁴ Harden.
¹³ The heaven. ¹⁵ Everything quite renounced.
¹⁶ See note 16, page 395. ¹⁷ Condemned.
¹⁸ Maddening. ¹⁹ Secretly contain.
²⁰ Robe. ²¹ Fashion.

Her linen stole to robe of scarlet red,
And moon-like mitre to a crown of gold;
That even she herself much wonder'd
At such a change, and joy'd to behold
Herself adorn'd with gems and jewels manifold.

And, in the midst of her felicity,
A hideous tempest seem'd from below
To rise through all the temple suddenly,
That from the altar all about did blow
The holy fire, and all the embers strow
Upon the ground; which, kindled privily,
Into outrageous flames unwares did grow,
That all the temple put in jeopardy
Of flaming, and herself in great perplexity.

With that the crocodile, which sleeping lay
Under the idol's feet in fearless bow'r,
Seem'd to awake in horrible dismay,
As being troubled with that stormy stowre;¹
And, gaping greedy wide, did straight devour
Both flames and tempest; with which grown
great,

And swoll'n with pride of his own peerless pow'r,
He gan to threaten her likewise to eat;
But that the goddess with her rod him back did
beat.

Then, turning all his pride to humbless² meek,
Himself before her feet he lowly threw,
And gan for grace and love of her to seek:
Which she accepting, he so near her drew,
That of his game³ she soon enwomb'd grew,
And forth did bring a lion of great might,
That shortly did all other beasts subdue:
With that she wak'd, full of fearful fright,
And doubtfully dismay'd through that so un-
couth sight.

So thereupon long while she musing lay,
With thousand thoughts feeding her fantasy:
Until she spied the lamp of lightsome day
Uplifted in the porch of heaven high:
Then up she rose, fraught with melancholy,
And forth into the lower parts did pass,
Where as the priests she found full busily
About their holy things for morrow mass;⁴
Whom she saluting fair, fair resaluted was.

"But, by the change of her uncheerful look,"
they perceived that she was ill at ease; and one,
who seemed "to be the wisest and the gravest
wight," hinted that the evil rest of last night
had annoyed her. She told to him her vision;
at the recital, through great astonishment, his
long locks stood up stiffly; and, "fill'd with
heav'nly fury, thus he her behight"⁵—betray-
ing his knowledge of her real sex:

"Magnific Virgin, that in quaint disguise
Of British arms dost mask thy royal blood,
So to pursue a perilous emprise;
How couldst thou ween, through that disguis'd
hood,⁶

To hide thy state from being understood?
Can from th' immortal gods aught hidden be?
They do thy lineage, and thy lordly brood,

¹ Trouble, peril.
³ Through his sport.
⁵ Addressed.

² Humility.
⁴ Morning service.
⁶ Dress.

They do thy sire lamenting sore for thee,
They do thy love forlorn in women's thralldom,
see.

"The end whereof, and all the long event,
They do to thee in this same dream discover:
For that same crocodile doth represent
The righteous Knight that is thy faithful lover,
Like to Osiris in all just endeavour:
For that same crocodile Osiris is,
That under Isis' feet doth sleep for ever;
To show that clemency⁷ oft, in things amiss,
Restrains those stern behests and cruel dooms⁸
of his.

"That Knight shall all the troublous storms
assuage,
And raging flames, that many foes shall rear⁹
To hinder thee from the just heritage
Of thy sire's crown, and from thy country dear.
Then shalt thou take him to thy lov'd fere,¹⁰
And join in equal portion of thy realm:
And afterwards a son to him shalt bear,
That lion-like shall show his power extreme.
So bless thee God, and give thee joyance of thy
dream!"

All which when she unto the end had heard,
She much was eas'd in her troublous thought,
And on those priests bestow'd rich reward;
And royal gifts of gold and silver wrought
She for a present to their goddess brought.
Then, taking leave of them, she forward went
To seek her love, where he was to be sought,
Nor rested till she came, without relent,¹¹
Unto the land of Amazons, as she was bent.

At the tidings of her arrival, Radigund was
"fill'd with courage and with joyous glee,"
though somewhat taken aback by the news that
the Iron Man, who lately had slain her people,
attended the new-comer. Britomart pitched
her pavilion before the city gate, and rested all
night under the guard of Talus; while "they of
the town in fright upon their wall good watch
and ward did keep." In the morning, the
Amazon queen issued forth to fight, and first
sought to impose on Britomart the "strait
conditions" on which she encountered her foes.
But Britomart disdained all terms that were
not prescribed by the laws of chivalry; and the
battle began, with great fury—neither warlike
lady sparing "their dainty parts, which nature
had created so fair and tender, without stain
or spot," for far other uses.

As when a tiger and a lioness
Are met at spoiling of some hungry prey,
Both challenge¹² it with equal greediness:
But first the tiger claws thereon did lay,
And therefore, loth to lose her right away,
Doth in defence thereof full stoutly stand:
To which the lion strongly doth gainsay,
That she to hunt the beast first took in hand;
And therefore ought it have wherever she it
fand.¹³

⁷ Clemency.

⁹ Raise.

¹¹ Delay.

⁸ Judgments.

¹⁰ Consort, husband.

¹² Dispute, claim.

¹³ Found.

Long and stoutly they fought, till they trod in gore, "and on the ground their lives did strow, like fruitless seed, of which untimely death should grow." At last Radigund let drive at her opponent with dreadful might, telling her to bear that token to the man she loved so dear. The stroke pierced to Britomart's shoulder-bone, and made a grisly wound; but, stung by furious pain, the Britoness struck the Amazon on the helmet with such force as to pierce her brain and throw her proud person prostrate on the ground—where with another blow the victor "both head and helmet cleft." At the sight of their mistress's fall all Radigund's train fled fast into the town;

But yet so fast they could not home retrace,¹
But that swift Talus did the foremost win;
And, pressing through the press unto the gate,
Pell-mell with them at once did enter in:
There then a piteous slaughter did begin;
For all that ever came within his reach
He with his iron flail did thresh so thin,
That he no work at all left for the leach;²
Like to a hideous storm, which nothing may
empeach.³

Entering the city, Britomart was struck with pity at the havoc of Talus, and restrained his hand, "else he sure had left not one alive." Then breaking open the prison of the degraded knights, and seeing "that loathly uncouth sight of men disguis'd in womanish attire," her heart began to grudge for deep despite "of so unmanly mask in misery midnight."⁴ Coming to her own lover, she had to turn aside her head for secret shame, and dismissed all her former jealous suspicions.

Not so great wonder and astonishment
Did the most chaste Penelope possess,
To see her lord, that was reported drent⁵
And dead long since in dolorous distress,
Come home to her in piteous wretchedness,
After long travel of full twenty years;
That she knew not his favour's likeness,⁶
For many scars and many hoary hairs;
But stood long staring on him 'mongst uncertain
fears.

"Ah! my dear lord, what sight is this," quoth she;

"What May-game hath misfortune made of you?
Where is that dreadful manly look? where be
Those mighty palms, the which ye wont t'embrue
In blood of kings, and great hosts to subdue?
Could aught on earth so wondrous change have
wrought,

As to have robb'd you of that manly hue?⁷
Could so great courage stoop'd have to naught?
Then farewell, fleshly force; I see thy pride is
naught!"

¹ Retreat, retire.

² For the surgeon: that is, he killed them outright.

³ Hinder.

⁴ Disfigured.

⁵ Drenched, drowned.

⁶ The likeness of his countenance.

⁷ Aspect.

⁸ Chamber.

⁹ To take off those vile, unseemly, garments.

Thenceforth she straight into a bow'r⁸ him
brought,
And caus'd him those unseemly weeds undight;⁹
And in their stead for other raiment sought,
Whereof there was great store, and armours
bright,
Which had been reft from many a noble knight,
Whom that proud Amazon subdu'd had
Whilst fortune favour'd her success in fight:
In which when as she him anew had clad,
She was reviv'd, and joy'd much in his sem-
blance¹⁰ glad.

So there a while they afterwards remain'd,
Him to refresh, and her late wounds to heal:
During which space she there as Princess reign'd;
And, changing all that form of commonweal,
The liberty of women did repeal,
Which they had long usurp'd; and, them restor-
ing

To men's subjection, did true justice deal:
That all they, as a goddess her adoring,
Her wisdom did admire, and hearken'd to her
loring.¹¹

She made the captive knights magistrates of the city, gave them great property, and obliged them to swear fealty to Artagall; who, much to the sorrow of his lady—sorrow repressed at the thought of what his honour required—soon set out on his adventure to redeem Irena. Britomart continued at the city for a time; then she set out to seek change of air and place, hoping that thereby her pain would be changed and her sorrow eased.

CANTO VIII.

Prince Arthur and Sir Artagall

Free Samient from fear:

They slay the Soldan; drive his wife

Adicia to despair.

NAUGHT under heav'n so strongly doth allure
The sense of man, and all his mind possess,
As beauty's lovely bait, that doth procure
Great warriors oft their rigour to repress,
And mighty hands forget their manliness;
Drawn with the pow'r of a heart-robbing eye,
And wrapt in fetters of a golden tress,
That can with melting pleassance mollify
Their harden'd hearts, inur'd to blood and
cruelty.

So whilom learn'd that mighty Jewish swain,¹²
Each of whose locks did match a man in might,
To lay his spoils before his leman's train:
So also did that great Cetean knight¹³
For his love's sake his lion's skin undight:¹⁴
And so did warlike Antony neglect
The world's whole rule for Cleopatra's sight.

¹⁰ Appearance.

¹¹ Teaching, lore.

¹² Samson.

¹³ Hercules, who burned himself to death on Mount Oeta, in Thessaly.

¹⁴ Put off: when the hero was at the court of Omphale.

Such wondrous pow'r hath women's fair aspect
To captive men, and make them all the world
reject.

"Yet could it not stern Artegall restrain"
from the adventure committed to his trust by
Gloriana; and after leaving Britomart he rested
idly neither night nor day. As he travelled,
attended by Talus alone, he saw a damsel fleeing
fast, "carried with wings of fear, like fowl
aghast," and chased fiercely by two knights;
who in their turn, as in the game of base, were
chased by a third knight. One of the pursuers
of the lady was forced to turn against the single
knight; but the other still followed the lady,
who gladly fled towards Sir Artegall for protec-
tion. The persecutor continuing the chase,
Artegall pitched him more than two spear's
lengths out of his saddle, upon his head, so that
his neck was broken, and he lay there dead.
Meantime the single knight, who had slain the
second pursuer of the lady, came up, and ran
with spear in rest against Sir Artegall, not stay-
ing to discriminate. The Knight met his
antagonist in the same fashion; both spears
were shivered; and both warriors drew their
swords. But the lady called on them to stay
their cruel hands, for both her Paynim perse-
cutors were slain—or, if they fought about her,
to end on her their revenge. The knights stop,
and raise their ventails; the stranger is found
to be Prince Arthur; and the pair interchange
apologies, courtesies, and assurances of friend-
ship. Artegall inquires of the Prince who the
two dead knights were; but the Prince does not
know, having only encountered them by chance;
and both seek an explanation from the damsel.
She says that she serves a queen who dwells not
far away, "a princess of great pow'r and
majesty, famous through all the world, and
honour'd far and nigh."

"Her name Mercilla¹ most men use to call;
That is a Maiden Queen of high renown
For her great bounty,² known over all,
And sov'reign grace, with which her royal
crown

She doth support, and strongly beateth down
The malice of her foes, which her envy
And at her happiness do fret and frown;
Yet she herself the more doth magnify,
And even to her foes her mercies multiply.

"'Mongst many which malign her happy state,
There is a mighty man, which wons³ hereby,
That with most fell despite and deadly hate
Seeks to subvert her crown and dignity,
And all his power doth thereunto apply:
And her good knights (of which so brave a
band

Serves her as any princess under sky),
He either spoils, if they against him stand,
Or to his part allures, and bribeth underhand.

"Nor him sufficeth all the wrong and ill

¹ The Merciful; Queen Elizabeth. ² Virtue.
³ Dwells. The "mighty man," or the "Soldan," is
the King of Spain, Philip II.

Which he unto her people does each day;
But that he seeks by traitorous trains to spill⁴
Her person, and her sacred self to slay:
That, O ye heav'ns, defend! and turn away
From her unto the miscreant himself;
That neither hath religion nor fay,⁵
But makes his God of his ungodly pelf,
And idols serves: so let his idols serve the elf!

"To all which cruel tyranny, they say,
He is provok'd, and stirr'd up day and night,
By his bad wife, that hight Adicia;⁶
Who counsels him, through confidence of might,
To break all bonds of law and rules of right:
For she herself professeth mortal foe
To Justice, and against her still doth fight,
Working, to all that love her, deadly woe,
And making all her knights and people to do
so."

Mercilla had sent the damsel to mediate with
Adicia for final peace and fair reconciliation;
but the haughty dame had thrust the envoy
out of doors like a dog, miscalling her by many
a bitter name; and, that no shame might be
wanting, had also sent in pursuit of her the two
knights whom Arthur and Artegall had just
slain, to be by them dishonoured and disgraced.
The two friends, having heard the story of
Samient (for so the damsel was named), re-
solved, in wrath, to take vengeance on the
Soldan and his Lady; and they agreed that, to
make their design the easier of success, Artegall
should array himself in the armour of one of
the two dead Knights, and take Samient, as if
she were a prisoner, unto the Soldan's Court.
The plan was executed; the Soldan's Lady,
seeing, as she thought, her Paynim knight re-
turning, sent a page to guide him to his appointed
place; and meantime Prince Arthur appeared
without, demanding of the Soldan, with bold
defiance, the release of the captive damsel.

Wherewith the Soldan, all with fury fraught,
Swearing and banning⁷ most blasphemously,
Commanded straight his armour to be brought;
And, mounting straight upon a chariot high
(With iron wheels and hooks arm'd dreadfully,
And drawn of cruel steeds, which he had fed
With flesh of men, whom through fell tyranny
He slaughter'd had, and ere they were half
dead
Their bodies to his beasts for provender did
spread);

So forth he came all in a coat of plate
Burnish'd with bloody rust; while on the green
The Briton Prince him ready did await,
In glist'ring arms right goodly well beseen,
That shone as bright as doth the heaven sheen;⁸
And by his stirrup Talus did attend,
Playing his page's part, as he had been
Before directed by his lord; to th' end
He should his flail to final execution bend.

Like to the Thracian tyrant,⁹ who, they say,

⁴ Destroy. ⁵ Faith.
⁶ Injustice. ⁷ Cursing.
⁸ Clear. ⁹ Diomedes.

Unto his horses gave his guests for meat,
Till he himself was made their greedy prey,
And torn in pieces by Alcides great ;
So thought the Soldan, in his folly's threat,
Either the Prince in pieces to have torn
With his sharp wheels, in his first rage's heat,
Or under his fierce horses' feet have borne,
And trampled down in dust his thoughts' dis-
dained scorn.

Arthur leapt aside before the chariot's swift
advance, shunning also a dart which the Paynim
threw at him. Vainly the Prince tried with his
spear point to reach his enemy, seated so high
and whirled so fast by his coursers ; and he was
wounded by a more successful dart launched by
the Soldan.

Much was he griev'd with that hapless throe,
That open'd had the well-spring of his blood ;
But much the more, that to his hateful foe
He might not come to wreak his wrathful mood :
That made him rave, like to a lion wood,¹
Which, being wounded of the huntsman's hand,
Cannot come near him in the covert wood,
Where he with boughs hath built his shady
stand,
And fenc'd himself about with many a flaming
brand.

At last, despairing of attaining the Soldan by
natural or human means, the Prince resorted to
supernatural ;² he drew from his shield the
cover that always veiled its dazzling brightness,
and, coming full before his enemy's horses,
showed the shield to them.

Like lightning flash that hath the gazer burn'd,
So did the sight thereof their sense dismay,
That back again upon themselves they turn'd,
And with their rider ran perforce away :
Nor could the Soldan them from flying stay
With reins or wonted rule, as well he knew :
Naught fear'd they what he could do or say,
But th' only fear that was before their view ;
From which like maz'd deer dismayfully they
flew.

Fast did they fly as them their feet could bear,
High over hills, and lowly over dales,
As they were follow'd of their former fear :
In vain the Pagan bans, and swears, and rails,
And back with both his hands unto him hales
The resty³ reins, regarded now no more :
He to them calls and speaks, yet naught avails ;
They hear him not, they have forgot his lore,
But go which way they list ; their guide they
have forlore.⁴

As when the fiery-mouth'd steeds, which drew
The Sun's bright wain to Phaethon's decay,
Soon as they did the monstrous Scorpion view,
With ugly crapes⁵ crawling in their way,
The dreadful sight did them so sore affray,
That their well-known courses they forwent ;⁶

¹ Furious.

² An admission that the defeat of King Philip's
Armada might not have been achieved, but for the
supernatural aid of the winds and waves.

³ Restive.

⁴ Claws.

⁵ Lost.

⁶ Forsook, strayed from.

And, leading th' ever burning lamp astray,
This lower world high all to ashes brent,⁷
And left their scorched path⁸ yet in the firma-
ment.

Such was the fury of these headstrong steeds,
Soon as the Infant's⁹ sunlike shield they saw,
That all obedience both to words and deeds
They quite forgot, and scorn'd all former law :
Through woods, and rocks, and mountains they
did draw

The iron chariot, and the wheels did tear,
And toss'd the Paynim without fear or awe ;
From side to side they toss'd him here and there,
Crying to them in vain that n'ould¹⁰ his crying
hear.

Yet still the Prince pursued him close behind,
Oft making offer him to smite, but found
No easy means according to his mind :
At last they have all overthrown to ground
Quite topside-turvy, and the Pagan hound,
Amongst the iron hooks and grapples keen,
Torn all to rags, and rent with many a wound ;
That no whole piece of him was to be seen,
But scatter'd all about, and strow'd upon the
green.

Like as the cursed son of Theseus,¹¹
That, following his chase in dewy morn,
To fly his stepdame's love outrageous,
Of his own steeds was all to pieces torn,
And his fair limbs left in the woods forlorn ;
That for his sake Diana did lament,
And all the woody nymphs did wail and mourn :
So was this Soldan rapt and all to-rent,
That of his shape appear'd no little monument.¹²
Only his shield and armour, which there lay,
Though nothing whole, but all to-bruis'd and
broken,

He up did take, and with him brought away,
That might remain for an eternal token
To all 'mongst whom this story should be spoken,
How worthily, by Heaven's high decree,
Justice that day of wrong herself had wroken ;¹³
That all men, which that spectacle did see,
By like ensample might for ever warn'd be.

Arthur hanged the arms on a tree before the
tyrant's door ; and at sight of them the tyrant's
Lady, wild with rage, ran with knife in hand to
revenge herself on the maiden messenger, Sami-
ent, still a prisoner.

Like raging Ino, when with knife in hand
She threw her husband's murder'd infant out ;
Or fell Medea, when on Colchic strand
Her brother's bones she scatter'd all about ;
Or as that madding mother, 'mongst the rout
Of Bacchus' priests, her own dear flesh did tear :
Yet neither Ino, nor Medea stout,
Nor all the Mænades so furious were
As this bold woman, when she saw that damsel
there.

⁷ Burned.

⁸ The Milky Way.

⁹ Prince's. See note 3, page 390.

¹⁰ Would not.

¹¹ Hippolytus. See page 331.

¹² Not even the least memorial.

¹³ Avenged.

But Artegall stayed in time her cruel hand,
and wrested the weapon from her grasp;
whereon she ran madly forth by a postern door
into the wild woods, and there she was, as it
is said, transformed to a tiger. Then Artegall,
discovering himself, issued forth and overcame
all the adherents of the Soldan and Adicia;
after which he caused the castle gates to be
opened wide, and entertained Prince Arthur as
victor of the day, presenting him with all the
rich array and royal pomp, "purchas'd through
lawless power and tortious wrong of that proud
Soldan." Having stayed a little time in the
castle, to rest, the two Knights took their jour-
ney, with Samient, to the court of Mercilla.

CANTO IX.

*Arthur and Artegall catch Gulle,
Whom Talus doth dismay:
They to Mercilla's palace come,
And see her rich array.*

WHAT tiger, or what other salvage wight,
Is so exceeding furious and fell
As Wrong, when it hath arm'd itself with
might;
Not fit 'mongst men that do with reason mell,¹
But 'mongst wild beasts and salvage woods, to
dwell;
Where still the stronger doth the weak devour,
And they that most in boldness do excel
Are dreaded most, and feared for their pow'r;
Fit for Adicia there to build her wicked bow'r.²

As Arthur and Artegall, invited by Samient,
journeyed to the court of Mercilla, their com-
panion told them of a wicked villain, bold and
stout, that dwelt in a rock not far away, and
took to his inaccessible den the pillage of all the
country round.

Thereto both his own wily wit, she said,
And eke the fastness of his dwelling-place,
Both unassailable, gave him great aid:
For he so crafty was to forge and face,³
So light of hand, and nimble of his pace,
So smooth of tongue, and subtile in his tale,
That could deceive one looking in his face:
Therefore by name Malengine⁴ they him call,
Well knownen by his feats, and famous over all.⁵

Through these his sleights he many doth con-
found:

And eke the rock, in which he wents to dwell,
Is wondrous strong and hewn far under ground,
A dreadful depth, how deep no man can tell;
But some do say it goeth down to hell:
And, all within, it full of windings is
And hidden ways, that scarce a hound by smell

¹ That meddle with or possess reason.

² Dwelling.

⁴ Gulle, Evil Ingenuity.

³ Dissemble.

⁵ Everywhere.

Can follow out those false footsteps of his,
Nor none can back return that once are gone
amiss.

Determined "to understand that villain's
dwelling-place," the knights induced Samient
to lead them thither. Arriving near the rock,
they agreed to send the damsel to weep and
wail near the mouth of the den, as if deploring
some calamity; their plan being to attract the
caitiff carl forth, and snare him ere he could
get back to his den. Samient accordingly,
throwing herself on the ground, began to lament
aloud.

The cry whereof, ent'ring the hollow cave,
Eftsoons brought forth the villain, as they
meant,

With hope of her some wishful boot⁶ to have.
Full dreadful wight he was as ever went
Upon the earth, with hollow eyes deep pent,
And long curl'd locks that down his shoulders
shagg'd,

And on his back an uncouth vestiment
Made of strange stuff, but all to-worn and ragg'd,
And underneath his breech was all to-torn and
jagg'd.

And in his hand a huge long staff he held,
Whose top was arm'd with many an iron hook,
Fit to catch hold of all that he could weld,⁷
Or in the compass of his clutches took;
And ever round about he cast his look:
Als⁸ at his back a great wide net he bore,
With which he seldom fish'd at the brook,
But us'd to fish for fools on the dry shore,
Of which he in fair weather wont to take great
store.

Him when the damsel saw fast by her side,
So ugly creature, she was nigh dismay'd;
And now for help aloud in earnest cried:
But, when the villain saw her so afraid,
He gan with guileful words her to persuade
To banish fear; and with Sardonian smile
Laughing on her, his false intent to shade,
Gan forth to lay his bait her to beguile,
That from herself unwares he might her steal
the while.

Like as the fowler on his guileful pipe
Charms to the birds full many a pleasant lay,
That they the while may take less heed to keep⁹
How he his nets doth for their ruin lay:
So did the villain to her prate and play,
And many pleasant tricks before her show,
To turn her eyes from his intent away:
For he in sleights and juggling feats did flow,¹⁰
And of legérdemain the mysteries did know.

To which whilst she lent her attentive mind,
He suddenly his net upon her threw,
That overspread her like a puff of wind;
And snatching her soon up, ere well she knew,
Ran with her fast away unto his mew,¹¹
Crying for help aloud: but when as nigh

⁶ Booty.

⁸ Also.

¹⁰ Abound.

⁷ Wield, carry.

⁹ Attention.

¹¹ Den.

He came unto his cave, and there did view
The arm'd knights stopping his passage by,
He threw his burden down, and fast away did fly.

But Artegall him after did pursue;
The while the Prince there kept the entrance
skill:

Up to the rock he ran, and thereon flew
Like a wild goat, leaping from hill to hill,
And dancing on the craggy cliffs at will;
That deadly danger seem'd in all men's sight
To tempt such steps, where footing was so ill:
Nor aught avail'd for the arm'd Knight
To think to follow him that was so swift and
light.

Which when he saw, his Iron Man he sent
To follow him; for he was swift in chase:
He him pursued wherever that he went;
Both over rocks, and hills, and ev'ry place
Whereso he fled, he follow'd him apace:
So that he shortly forc'd him to forsake
The height, and down descend unto the base:
There he him cours'd afresh, and soon did make
To leave his proper form, and other shape to
take.

Into a fox himself he first did turn;
But he him hunted like a fox full fast:
Then to a bush himself he did transform;
But he the bush did beat, till that at last
Into a bird it chang'd, and from him past,
Flying from tree to tree, from wand to wand:
But he then stones at it so long did cast,
That like a stone it fell upon the land;
But he then took it up, and held fast in his
hand.

So he it brought with him unto the knights,
And to his lord Sir Artegall it lent,
Warning him hold it fast for fear of sleights:¹
Who whilst in hand it griping hard he hent,²
Into a hedgehog all unwares it went,
And prick'd him so that he away it threw:
Then gan it run away incontinent,
Being return'd to his former hue;
But Talus soon him overtook, and backward
drew.

But, when as he would to a snake again
Have turn'd himself, he with his iron flail
Gan drive at him with so huge might and main,
That all his bones as small as sandy grail³
He broke, and did his bowels disentrail,⁴
Crying in vain for help, when help was past;
So did deceit the self deceiver fail:⁵
There they him left a carrion out cast
For beasts and fowls to feed upon for their
repast.

Passing forth, they came to the stately palace
of Samient's mistress, Mercilla; "most sacred
wight, most debonair and free," that ever was
seen on earth or crowned with diadem.

There they alighting, by that damsel were
Directed in, and shew'd all the sight;

¹ Tricks.

² Gravel.

³ Deceive the deceiver himself.

⁴ Judgment.

⁵ Held, grasped.

⁶ Dash out, dislodge.

⁷ Revenged.

Whose porch, that most magnific did appear,
Stood open wide to all men day and night;
Yet ward'd well by one of mickle might,
That sat thereby, with giant-like resemblance,
To keep out guile, and malice, and despite,
That, under show oft-times of feign'd semblance,
Are wont in princes' courts to work great scathe
and hindrance:

His name was Awe; by whom they passing in
Went up the hall, that was a large wide room,
All full of people making troublous din
And wondrous noise, as if that there were some
Which unto them was dealing righteous doom:⁸
By whom they passing through the thickest
press,

The marshal of the hall to them did come,
His name hight Order; who, commanding peace,
Them guided through the throng, that did their
clamours cease.

They ceas'd their clamours upon them to gaze;
Whom seeing all in armour bright as day,
Strange there to see, it did them much amaze,
And with unwonted terror half affray:
For never saw they there the like array;
Nor ever was the name of war there spoken,
But joyous peace and quietness alway
Dealing just judgments, that might not be
broken

For any bribes, or threats of any to be wroken.⁹

There, as they enter'd at the screen, they saw
Some one, whose tongue was for his trespass vile
Nail'd to a post, adjudg'd so by law;
For that therewith he falsely did revile
And foul blaspheme that Queen for forg'd
guile,

Both with bold speeches which he blaz'd had,
And with lewd poems which he did compile;
For the bold title of a poet bad
He on himself had ta'en, and railing rhymes
had sprad.¹⁰

Thus there he stood, whilst high over his head
There written was the purport of his sin,
In ciphers strange, that few could rightly read,
Bonfont; ¹¹ but *Bon*, that once had written been,
Was ras'd out, ¹² and *Mal* was now put in:
So now *Malfont* ¹³ was plainly to be read;
Either for th' evil which he did therein,
Or that he liken'd was to a wellhead
Of evil words and wicked slanders by him shed.

They, passing by, were guided by degree
Unto the presence of that gracious Queen;
Who sat on high, that she might all men see,
And might of all men royally be seen,
Upon a throne of gold full bright and sheen,¹⁴
Adorn'd all with gems of endless price,
As either might for wealth have gotten been,
Or could be fram'd by workman's rare device;
And all emboss'd with lions and with fleur-de-
lice.¹⁵

All over her a cloth of state was spread,

⁸ Spread.

⁹ Fount of Good.

¹⁰ Erased.

¹¹ Fount of Evil.

¹² Shining.

¹³ The royal flower of France, shown in the royal
shield of England.

Not of rich tissue, nor of cloth of gold,
Nor of aught else that may be richest read,¹
But like a cloud, as likest may be told,
That her broad-spreading wings did wide unfold;
Whose skirts were border'd with bright sunny
beams,
Glist'ring like gold amongst the plights² en-
roll'd,
And here and there shooting forth silver streams,
'Mongst which crept little angels through the
glitt'ring gleams.

Seem'd those little angels did uphold
The cloth of state, and on their purpled wings
Did bear the pendants through their nimble³
bold;

Besides, a thousand more of such as sings
Hymns to High God, and carols heavenly things,
Encompass'd the throne on which she sate;
She, angel-like, the heir of ancient kings
And mighty conquerors, in royal state;
Whilst Kings and Kaisers at her feet did them
prostrate.

In her hand was a sceptre, the "sacred pledge
of peace and clemency;" and at her feet was
laid her sword, rusted with long rest, though
when foes enforced, or friends sought aid, "she
could it sternly draw, that all the world dis-
may'd."

And round about before her feet there sate
A bevy of fair virgins clad in white,
That goodly seem'd t' adorn her royal state;
All lovely daughters of high Jove, that hight
Litæ,⁴ by him begot in love's delight
Upon the righteous Themis; those, they say,
Upon Jove's judgment-seat wait day and night;
And, when in wrath he threatens the world's decay,
They do his anger calm and cruel vengeance stay.

They also do, by his divine permission,
Upon the thrones of mortal Princes tend,
And often treat for pardon and remission
To suppliants through frailty which offend:
Those did upon Mercilla's throne attend,
Just Dice,⁵ wise Eunomie,⁶ mild Eirene;⁷
And them amongst, her glory to commend,
Sat goodly Temperance in garments clean,
And sacred Reverence, y-born of heav'nly
strene.⁸

Underneath Mercilla's feet was a huge great
lion, "with a strong iron chain and collar bound,"
so that he could not stir, but only "murmur
with rebellious sound," when "savage choler
gan redound." The two Knights made lowly
reverence to the Queen, who received them with
mild and cheerful air; and soon she returned
to the business that occupied her when they
arrived—"the trial of a great and weighty
case"—for their better understanding of which
she took them up into her throne, and set them
one on each side. And now, under the allegory

of the trial of Duessa, who unexpectedly turns
up, we have a most remarkable statement of
the case between Elizabeth and Mary Queen of
Scots—whose head had fallen at Fotheringay
nearly ten years before this passage was pub-
lished.

Then was there brought, as prisoner to the bar,
A lady of great countenance and place,
But that she it with foul abuse did mar;
Yet did appear rare beauty in her face,
But blotted with condition vile and base,
That all her other honour did obscure,
And titles of nobility deface:
Yet, in that wretched semblant,⁹ she did sure
The people's great compassion unto her allure.

Then up arose a person of deep reach
And rare insight hard matters to reveal;
That well could charm his tongue, and time his
speech

To all essays;¹⁰ his name was call'd Zeal:
He gan that Lady strongly to appeal¹¹
Of many heinous crimes by her enur'd;¹²
And with sharp reasons rang her such a peal,
That those, whom she to pity had allur'd,
He now t' abhor and loathe her person had
procur'd.

First gan he tell how this, that seem'd so fair
And royally array'd, Duessa hight;
That false Duessa, which had wrought great
care¹³

And mickle mischief unto many a knight,
By her beguil'd and confounded quite:
But not for those she now in question came,
Though also those might question'd be aright,
But for vile treasons and outrageous shame,
Which she against the dread Mercilla oft did
frame.

For she whilom (as ye might yet right well
Remember) had her counsels false conspir'd
With faithless Blandamour and Paridell¹⁴
(Both two her paramours, both by her hir'd,
And both with hope of shadows vain inspir'd),
And with them practis'd, how for to deprive
Mercilla of her crown, by her aspir'd,¹⁵
That she might it unto herself derive,
And triumph in their blood whom she to death
did drive.

But through high heaven's grace, which favour
not
The wicked drifts of traitorous designs
'Gainst loyal princes, all this curs'd plot,
Ere proof it took,¹⁶ discover'd was betimes,
And th' actors won the meed meet for their
crimes:

Such be the meed of all that by such mean¹⁷
Unto the type of kingdom's title climbs!
But false Duessa, now untitled Queen,
Was brought to her sad doom, as here was to be
seen.

¹ Described, discovered.

² Nimbleness.

³ Justice.

⁴ Peace.

⁵ Appearance.

⁶ Impeach.

⁷ Folds, plaits.

⁸ Prayers.

⁹ Making of good laws.

¹⁰ Stock, race.

¹¹ Undertakings.

¹² Committed.

¹³ Trouble.

¹⁴ The Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, leaders of the Northern Insurrection of 1569, are believed to be signified under these names.

¹⁵ Aspired to (by Duessa).

¹⁶ Ere it was put in execution.

¹⁷ Means.

Strongly did Zeal her heinous fact enforce,
And many other crimes of foul defame¹
Against her brought, to banish all remorse,
And aggravate the horror of her blame :
And with him, to make part against her, came
Many grave persons that against her pled.
First was a sage old sire,² that had to name
The Kingdom's Care, with a white silver head,
That many high regards and reasons 'gainst her
read.

Then gan Authority her to oppose
With peremptory power, that made all mute ;
And then the Law of Nations 'gainst her rose,
And reasons brought, that no man could refute ;
Next gan Religion 'gainst her to impute
High God's behest, and pow'r of holy laws ;
Then gan the People's Cry, and Commons' Suit,
Importune care of their own public cause ;
And lastly Justice charg'd her with breach of
laws.

But then, for her, on the contrary part,
Rose many advocates for her to plead :
First there came Pity, with full tender heart ;
And with her join'd Regard of Womanhead ;
And then came Danger, threat'ning hidden dread
And high alliance unto foreign pow'r ;³
Then came Nobility of Birth, that bred
Great ruth⁴ through her misfortune's tragic
stowre ;⁵
And lastly Grief did plead, and many tears forth
pour.

With the near touch whereof in tender heart
The Briton Prince⁶ was sore empassionate,
And wox inclin'd much unto her part,
Through the sad terror of so dreadful fate,
And wretched ruin of so high estate ;
That for great ruth his courage⁷ gan relent :
Which when as Zeal perceiv'd to abate,
He gan his earnest fervour to augment,
And many fearful objects to them to present.

He gan t' enforce the evidence anew,
And new accusations to produce in place :
He brought forth that old hag of hellish hue,
The cursed Até, brought her face to face,
Who privy was and party in the case :
She, glad of spoil and ruinous decay,
Did her impeach ; and, to her more disgrace,
The plot of all her practice did display,
And all her trains⁸ and all her treasons forth
did lay.

Then brought he forth with grisly grim aspect
Abhorred Murder, who, with bloody knife
Yet dropping fresh in hand, did her detect,
And there with guilty bloodshed charg'd rife :
Then brought he forth Sedition, breeding strife
In troublous wits, and mutinous uproar :
Then brought he forth Incontinence of life,
Ev'n foul Adultery her face before,
And lewd Impiety, that her accus'd sore.

All which when as the Prince had heard and seen,

¹ Disgrace.

² Lord Treasurer Burleigh.

³ France.

⁴ Pity.

⁵ Assault.

⁶ The Earl of Leicester is supposed to be represented in Prince Arthur ; he was believed to have been disposed towards the cause of Mary.

His former fancy's ruth⁹ he gan repent,
And from her party eftsoons was drawn clean :
But Artegall, with constant firm intent
For zeal of Justice, was against her bent :
So was she guilty deem'd of them all.
Then Zeal began to urge her punishment,
And to their Queen for judgment loudly call,
Unto Mercilla mild, for Justice 'gainst the thrall.
But she, whose princely breast was touch'd near
With piteous ruth of her so wretched plight,
Though plain she saw, by all that she did hear,
That she of death was guilty found by right,
Yet would not let just vengeance on her light ;
But rather let, instead thereof, to fall
Few pearling drops from her fair lamps of light ;
The which she, cov'ring with her purple pall,
Would have the passion hid, and up arose withal.

CANTO X.

*Prince Arthur takes the enterprise
For Belgé for to fight :
Geryoneo's Seneschal
He slays in Belgé's right.*

SOME clerks¹⁰ do doubt in their deviceful art
Whether this heav'nly thing whereof I treat,
To weeten¹¹ Mercy, be of Justice part,
Or drawn forth from her by divine extreat :¹²
This well I wot, that sure she is as great,
And meriteth to have as high a place,
Since in th' Almighty's everlasting seat
She first was bred, and born of heav'nly race ;
From thence pour'd down on men by influence
of grace.

For if that virtue be of so great might,
Which from just verdict will for nothing start,
But, to preserve inviolated right,
Oft spills¹³ the principal to save the part ;
So much more, then, is that of pow'r and art
That seeks to save the subject of her skill,
Yet never doth from doom¹⁴ of right depart ;
As it is greater praise to save than spill,
And better to reform than to out off the ill.

The poet continues to praise the clemency of Mercilla, who moderated the judgment against Duessa "without grief or gall," until enforced thereto by strong constraint ; even then pitying "her wilful fall with more than needful natural remorse, and yielding the last honour to her wretched corse." While Arthur and Artegall were entertained at court, "approving daily to their noble eyes royal examples of her mercies rare, and worthy patterns of her clemencies," two youths came from a foreign land, sent by their widowed mother to seek Mercilla's aid against a strong tyrant, who had invaded her land, and slain her children.

⁷ Heart.

⁸ Stratagems.

¹⁰ Learned men.

¹² Extraction.

¹⁴ Judgment.

⁹ Pity.

¹¹ To wit.

¹³ Ruina.

Her name was Belgé; who, in former age,
A lady of great worth and wealth had been,
And mother of a fruitful heritage,
Ev'n sev'nteen goodly sons;¹ which who had
seen

In their first flow'r, before this fatal teen²
Them overtook, and their fair blossoms
blasted,

More happy mother would her surely ween
Than famous Niobé, before she tasted
Latona's children's wrath, that all her issue
wasted.

But this fell tyrant,³ through his tortious⁴
power,

Had left her now but five⁵ of all that brood:
For twelve of them he did by times devour,
And to his idols sacrifice their blood,
Whilst he of none was stopp'd nor withstood:
For soothly⁶ he was one of matchless might,
Of horrible aspect and dreadful mood,
And had three bodies in one waist empight,⁷
And th' arms and legs of three to succour him
in fight.

He was the son of Geryon—the three-bodied
giant whose oxen Hercules carried away from
Spain; and, when his father fell under Alcides'
club, he fled from Spain to the land where
Belgé dwelt, a new-made widow, flourishing in
all wealth and happiness. Taking advantage of
her widowhood and yet fresh woes, Geryoneo
offered his services against foreign enemies, and
by careful diligence he induced her to commit
to him everything. From that time he began
to create strife and trouble; giving the chil-
dren of Belgé one by one to a dreadful monster
to devour, "and setting up an idol of his own,
the image of his monstrous parent Geryon." The
woeful widow had no resource but to appeal
for aid to Mercilla; and her two eldest sons had
just arrived to seek that succour. All the other
knights hung back from undertaking the enter-
prise; but Prince Arthur (still representing the
Earl of Leicester, who in 1585 went to the
Netherlands as Captain-General) accepted the
adventure, and next morning set out with
Belgé's two sons.

It was not long till that the Prince arriv'd
Within the land where dwelt that Lady sad;
Whereof that tyrant had her now depriv'd,
And into moors and marshes banish'd had,
Out of the pleasant soil and cities glad
In which she went to harbour happily:
But now his cruelty so sore she drad,⁸
That to those fens for fastness⁹ she did fly,
And there herself did hide from his hard tyranny.

"There he her found in sorrow and dismay,
all solitary without living wight," and alarmed

at the view of an armed stranger, till she saw
her two sons, and understood that they brought
succour. Embracing them with tears, she told
them that already she felt her spirits recover,
and already Fortune's wheel began to turn;
then she thanked the Prince, that had taken
such toilsome pain "for wretched woman, miser-
able wight." Much moved by her distress, he
sought to comfort her, and asked her to go with
him to some place where they might rest and
feed, and she might regain her heart and hope.

"Ah me!" said she, "and whither shall I go?
Are not all places full of foreign pow'rs?
My palaces possess'd of my foe,
My cities sack'd, and their sky-threat'ning tow'rs
Raz'd and made smooth fields now full of flow'rs?
Only these marishes and miry bogs,
In which the fearful efts do build their bow'rs,
Yield me an hostry¹⁰ 'mongst the croaking frogs,
And harbour here in safety from those ravenous
dogs."

"Nathless," said he, "dear Lady, with me go;
Some place shall us receive and harbour yield;
If not, we will it force, maugré¹¹ your foe,
And purchase it to us with spear and shield:
And if all fail, yet farewell¹² open field!
The Earth to all her creatures lodging lends."
With such his cheerful speeches he doth wield¹³
Her mind so well, that to his will she bends;
And, binding up her locks and weeds,¹⁴ forth
with him wends.¹⁵

They came unto a city far up land,
The which whilom that Lady's own had been;
But now by force extort¹⁶ out of her hand
By her strong foe, who had defac'd clean
Her stately tow'rs and buildings sunny sheen,¹⁷
Shut up her haven, marr'd her merchants' trade,
Robb'd her people that full rich had been,
And in her neck a castle¹⁸ huge had made,
The which did her command without needing
persuade.

That castle was the strength of all that State,
Until that State by strength was pull'd down;
And that same city, so now ruinate,
Had been the key of all that kingdom's crown;
Both goodly castle, and both goodly town,
Till that th' offended heavens list to lour
Upon their bliss, and baleful fortune frown.
When those 'gainst states and kingdoms do con-
jure,¹⁹

Who then can think their headlong ruin to re-
cure!²⁰

But he had brought it now in servile bond,
And made it bear the yoke of Inquisition,
Striving long time in vain it to withstand;
Yet glad at last to make most base submission,
And life enjoy for any composition:

¹ The seventeen provinces of the Netherlands.

² Affliction.

³ The King of Spain.

⁴ Wrongous.

⁵ The five northern provinces (Holland, Zealand, Utrecht, Guelderland, and Friesland) which in 1579 asserted their independence against Spain, and, by the Union of Utrecht, formed themselves into a separate republic, that subsequently took the name of Holland.

⁶ Truly.

⁷ Contained in one waist.

⁸ Dreaded.

¹⁰ Hostelry, lodging.

¹² Welfare, welcome.

¹⁴ Garments.

¹⁶ Extorted.

¹⁸ The city is Antwerp, the great seat of Netherlandish commerce; which was strongly fortified, and made a splendid resistance to the Prince of Parma in 1585.

¹⁹ Conspire.

⁹ Security.

¹¹ Despite.

¹³ Influence.

¹⁵ Goes.

¹⁷ Bright.

²⁰ Recover.

So now he hath new laws and orders new
Impos'd on it with many a hard condition,
And forc'd it, the honour that is due
To God, to do unto his idol most untrue.

To him he hath before this castle green
Built a fair chapel, and an altar fram'd
Of costly ivory full rich beseen,
On which that curs'd idol, far proclaim'd,
He hath set up, and him his god hath nam'd;
Off'ring to him in sinful sacrifice
The flesh of men, to God's own likeness fram'd,
And pouring forth their blood in brutish wise,
That any iron eyes to see it would arise.¹

And, for more horror and more cruelty,
Under that curs'd idol's altar-stone
A hideous monster² doth in darkness lie,
Whose dreadful shape was never seen of none
That lives on earth; but unto those alone
The which unto him sacrific'd be:
Those he devours, they say, both flesh and bone;
What else they have is all the tyrant's fee:³
So that no whit of them remaining one may see.

There also he had placed a strong garrison,
and a seneschal⁴ of dreaded might (Prince Alexander of Parma, Regent of the Netherlands),
who first vanquished and then shamed all venturous knights. Belgé counsels Prince Arthur to shun the place; but, naught regarding her fearful speeches, he sends by the guard a challenge to their tyrant's seneschal—who soon comes riding forth to fight with courage fierce. "They both encounter in the middle plain;" the seneschal's spear is shivered on Arthur's shield, while Arthur's spear transfixes and slays his opponent. The Prince then advances to the castle, but three knights issue forth and attack him simultaneously, like "three great culverins⁵ for battery bent, and levell'd all against one certain place." Never even swerving in his saddle under their shock, Arthur drives his spear through the body of him that rides in the midst. The two others fly; but the pursuer slays one in the threshold, the other in the hall; then all that are in the castle flee away through a postern door. Finding none to oppose him, the Prince went to lead the delighted Lady into the castle, with her two beloved sons; "and all that night themselves they cherish'd."

CANTO XI.

*Prince Arthur overcomes the great
Geryoneo in fight:
Doth slay the monster, and restore
Belgé unto her right.*

At the news that Lady Belgé had found a champion, who had overthrown his seneschal, and threatened to confound himself, Geryoneo "gan

burn in rage, and freeze in fear, doubting sad end of principle unsound." Nevertheless he armed himself in haste, and came to the castle, demanding that the Prince should "deliver him his own, ere yet too late." Coming forth prepared for battle, the Prince asked if he was the same that had done all that wrong to the woeful dame. The tyrant boldly answered that he stood there "that would his doings justify with his own hand." Then with his great iron axe he flew at Arthur furiously; and so great advantage had he from "his three double hands thrice multiplied," that the Prince was forced to fight a wary and defensive battle. By a swift counterstroke, he smote off one of the monster's arms; and Geryoneo responded with a blow that, lighting on the head of the Prince's horse, stunned him and compelled his rider to dismount. Before long Arthur shore away two more of his adversary's arms, that fell "like fruitless branches, which the hatchet's sleight hath pruned from the native tree and cropp'd quite." With that the tyrant grew all mad and furious, "like a fell mastiff through enraging heat," cursing and blaspheming most horribly, and fighting furiously at random. Taking advantage of a blow in which Geryoneo overreached himself, Arthur smote him through all the three bodies, and tumbled him on the plain "biting the earth for very death's disdain." Seeing the tyrant's fall, Belgé went forth in haste to greet and thank the Prince; prostrating herself, with her sons, at his feet, in presence of all the people on the city walls, and offering to him as guerdon of his pain the realm which he had saved. The Prince, taking her up by the lily hand, assured her that the truth and right of her cause had really fought for her that day, and he needed no other reward than that which virtue always yields—"that is, the virtue's self, which her reward doth pay." Humbly thanking him for that wondrous grace, she entreated him not to stay his victorious arm till he had rooted out all the relics of that vile tyrant race. He asked what yet remained; and she answered:

"Then wot⁶ you, Sir, that in this church hereby
There stands an idol of great note and name,
The which this giant rear'd first on high,
And of his own vain fancy's thought did frame:
To whom, for endless horror of his shame,
He offer'd up for daily sacrifice
My children and my people, burnt in flame
With all the tortures that he could devise,
The more t' aggrate⁷ his god with such his
bloody guise.

"And underneath this idol there doth lie
A hideous monster, that doth it defend,
And feeds on all the carcasses that die
In sacrifice unto that curs'd fiend:
Whose ugly shape none ever saw, nor kenn'd,⁸
That ever scap'd: for of a man, they say,
It has the voice, that speeches forth doth send,

¹ Horrify.

² Property.

³ The Inquisition.

⁴ Steward, governor.

⁵ Cannons.

⁷ Gratify.

⁶ Know.

⁸ Knew.

Even blasphemous words, which she doth bray
Out of her poisonous entrails fraught with dire
decay."¹

Which when the Prince heard tell, his heart gan
yearn

For great desire that monster to assay;
And pray'd the place of her abode to learn:
Which being show'd, he gan himself straightway
Thereto address, and his bright shield display.
So to the church he came, where it was told
The monster underneath the altar lay;
There he that idol saw of massy gold
Most richly made, but there no monster did
behold.

Upon the image with his naked blade
Three times, as in defiance, there he strook;²
And, the third time, out of a hidden shade
There forth issued from under th' altar's smook:³
A dreadful fiend with foul deform'd look,
That stretch'd itself as it had long lain still;
And her long tail and feathers strongly shook,
That all the temple did with terror fill;
Yet him naught terrified that fear'd nothing ill.

A huge great beast it was, when it in length
Was stretch'd forth, that nigh fill'd all the place,
And seem'd to be of infinite great strength;
Horrible, hideous, and of hellish race,
Born of the brooding of Echidna base,
Or other like infernal Fury's kind:
For of a maid she had the outward face,
To hide the horror which did lurk behind,
The better to beguile whom she so fond⁴ did
find.

Thereto⁵ the body of a dog she had,
Full of fell ravin⁶ and fierce greediness,
A lion's claws, with pow'r and rigour clad,
To rend and tear whatso she can oppress;
A dragon's tail, whose sting without redress
Full deadly wounds whereso it is empight;⁷
An eagle's wings, for scope and speediness,
That nothing may escape her reaching might,
Whereto she ever list to make her hardy flight.

Much like in foulness and deformity
Unto that monster,⁸ whom the Theban knight,⁹
The father of that fatal progeny,
Made kill herself for very heart's despite
That he had read her riddle, which no wight
Could ever loose,¹⁰ but suffer'd deadly dool:¹¹
So also did this monster use like sleight
To many a one which came unto her school,
Whom she did put to death deceiv'd like a fool.

When the beast beheld the Prince, she would
have fled, but he forced her to turn and fight.
She griped his shield with all her strength; but
"her lion's claws he from her feet away did
wipe;" then, casting forth foul blasphemous
speeches and bitter curses, she struck at him
with her huge tail, and made him stagger:

As when the mast of some well-timber'd hulk
Is with the blast of some outrageous storm

Blown down, it shakes the bottom of the bulk,
And makes her ribs to crack as they were torn;
Whilst still she stands astonish'd and forlorn;
So was he stunn'd with stroke of her huge tail:
But, ere that it she back again had borne,
He with his sword it struck, that without fail
He jointed it, and marr'd the swinging of her
flail.

Crying much louder than before, the fiend
reared herself on her wide great wings, and flew
at the Prince's head; but, thrusting his fatal
sword under her belly, he made a way for her
entrails to gush forth. "Then down to ground
fell that deform'd mass;" and Arthur, all his
tasks and dangers over, "went forth his glad-
ness to partake" with Belgé. Great laud and
rejoicing attended his victory over the beast,
and his subsequent destruction of the idol;
and the Prince stayed for a while with Belgé,
"making great feast and joyous merriment,"
until he had securely re-established her in her
kingdom. Then, taking leave of the Lady, he
set out afresh on "his first emprise"—his quest
after Gloriana.

"But turn we now to noble Artegall," who,
attended only by Talus, had gone forth from
the court of Mercilla, to deliver Irena and
punish Grantorto. As he travelled, he met the
aged man, Sergis, who had attended Irena when
she came to Faery Court to ask aid; and the
Knight sought of him news of his mistress.
Sergis answered that she lived sure and sound,
though bound in wretched thralldom by the
tyrant;

"For she, presuming on th' appointed tide¹²
In which ye promis'd, as ye were a knight,
To meet her at the Salvage Island's¹³ side,
And then and there, for trial of her right,
With her unrighteous enemy to fight,
Did thither come; where she, afraid of naught,
By guileful treason and by subtle sleight
Surpris'd was, and to Grantorto brought,
Who her imprison'd hath, and her life often
sought.

"And now he hath to her prefix'd a day,
By which if that no champion do appear
Which will her cause in battailous array
Against him justify, and prove her clear
Of all those crimes that he 'gainst her doth rear,¹⁴
She death shall sure aby." ¹⁵ Those tidings sad
Did much abash Sir Artegall to hear,
And griev'd sore, that through his fault she had
Fallen into that tyrant's hand and usage bad.

Artegall calls on heaven to witness that he is
"clear from blame of this upbraid," having
been prevented from keeping his time by his
own captivity; and, learning that the tyrant
has allowed ten days of grace, the Knight vows
that if he lives till those ten days have end she
shall have aid, though he should die for her.
As he proceeds on his way with Sergis, Artegall

¹ Destruction.

² Smoke.

³ Moreover.

⁴ Infix'd.

⁵ Struck.

⁶ Foolish.

⁷ Ravenousness.

⁸ The Sphinx.

⁹ Oedipus.

¹⁰ Misfortune.

¹¹ Ireland's.

¹² Suffer.

¹³ Solve.

¹⁴ Time.

¹⁵ Assert.

sees before him a crowd of people flocking confusedly together, as if there were some tumultuous affray.

To which as they approach'd the cause to know,
They saw a knight¹ in dangerous distress
Of a rude rout² him chasing to and fro,
That sought with lawless pow'r him to oppress,
And bring in bondage of their brutishness :
And far away, amid their rakehell bands,
They spied a lady³ left all succourless,
Crying, and holding up her wretched hands
To him for aid, who long in vain their rage
withstands.

Yet still he strives, nor any peril spares,
To rescue her from their rude violence ;
And like a lion wood⁴ amongst them fares,
Dealing his dreadful blows with large dispence,⁵
'Gainst which the pallid death finds no defence :
But all in vain ; their numbers are so great,
That naught may boot to banish them from
thence ;

For, soon as he their outrage back doth beat,
They turn afresh, and oft renew their former
threat.

And now they do so sharply him assay,
That they his shield in pieces batter'd have,
And forc'd him to throw it quite away,⁶
From dangers dread his doubtful life to save ;
All be⁷ that it most safety to him gave,
And much did magnify his noble name :
For from the day that he thus did it leave,
Amongst all knights he blotted was with blame,
And counted but a recreant knight with endless
shame.

Artegall went to the knight's aid ; but the
"rude rout" boldly assailed him and his companions, and fled only when the Iron Man had brought his huge flail into play. The rescued knight drew near to thank his deliverer ; and Artegall inquired the whole occasion of his recent evil plight, and who he and his pursuers were. His name, he answered, was Bourbon, heretofore far renowned, until by late mischief his former praise had all been sorely blemished. The Lady was Fleur-de-lis, his own love, though she had abandoned him ; "whether withheld from him by wrongful might, or with her own good will," he could not tell. She had at first plighted her faith to him, till a tyrant, Grantorto (not the Grantorto of Irena—who is an abstraction of Wrong—but here signifying the King of Spain) had enticed her away "with golden gifts and many a guileful word ;" and since that time she had abhorred her former lord. Grantorto had now sent a troop of villains to carry her off by open force ; and it was while Bourbon strove against great odds to retain her, that Artegall had come up.

¹ Henry Bourbon of Navarre, or Henry IV. of France.

² The rebellious Roman Catholics, under the name of the League.

³ France ; or the French crown.

⁴ Furious.

⁵ Lavish abundance.

⁶ The shield is the Protestant religion, which, under

"But why have ye," said Artegall, "forborne Your own good shield in dangerous dismay ? That is the greatest shame and foulest scorn Which unto any knight behappen may, To lose the badge that should his deeds display."

To whom Sir Bourbon, blushing half for shame ;
"That shall I unto you," quoth he, "bewray ;⁸
Lest ye therefor might happily⁹ me blame,
And deem it done of will, that through enforcement came.

"True is, that I at first was dubb'd knight
By a good knight, the Knight of the Redcross ;
Who, when he gave me arms in field to fight,
Gave me a shield, in which he did endoss¹⁰
His dear Redeemer's badge upon the boss :
The same long while I bore, and therewithal
Fought many battles without wound or loss ;
Therewith Grantorto's self I did appal,
And made him oftentimes in field before me
fall.

"But for¹¹ that many did that shield envy,
And cruel enemies increas'd more,
To stint all strife and troublous enmity,
That bloody scutcheon, being batter'd sore,
I laid aside, and have of late forbore ;
Hoping thereby to have my love obtain'd :
Yet can I not my love have nathemore ;
For she by force is still from me detain'd,
And with corruptful bribes is to untruth mis-
train'd."¹²

To whom thus Artegall ; "Certes, Sir Knight,
Hard is the case the which ye do complain ;
Yet not so hard (for naught so hard may light¹³
That it to such a strait might you constrain)
As to abandon that which doth contain
Your honour's style, that is, your warlike shield.
All peril ought be less, and less all pain,
Than loss of fame in disadventurous field :
Die, rather than do aught that might dishonour
yield !"

"Not so," quoth he ; "for yet, when time doth
serve,

My former shield I may resume again :
To temporize is not from truth to swerve,
Nor for advantage term to entertain,
When as necessity doth it constrain."

"Fie on such forgery," said Artegall,

"Under one hood to shadow faces twain :
Knights ought be true, and truth is one in
all ;

Of all things, to dissemble, foully may befall !"¹⁴

Bourbon nevertheless entreated the Knight, of his courtesy, to aid him against those peasants and free his love from their hands ; after an arduous battle the flail of Talus had its usual effect ; and the troop of villains was scattered to all the winds.

the pressure of his and its enemies, Henry IV. renounced in 1593.

⁷ Although.

⁸ Reveal.

⁹ Haply.

¹⁰ Endorse, inscribe.

¹¹ Because.

¹² Mised.

¹³ Chance.

¹⁴ Foul or evil hap befall those who dissemble !

At last they came where as that Lady bode,¹
Whom now her keepers had forsaken quite
To save themselves, and scatter'd were abroad :
Her half dismay'd they found in doubtful plight,
As neither glad nor sorry for their sight ;
Yet wondrous fair she was, and richly clad
In royal robes, and many jewels dight ;²
But that those villains, through their usage bad,
Them foully rent and shamefully defac'd had.

But Burbon, straight dismounting from his steed,
Unto her ran with greedy great desire,
And catching her fast by her ragged weed³
Would have embrac'd her with heart entire :⁴
But she, backstarting with disdainful ire,
Bade him avaunt, nor would unto his lore⁵
Allur'd be for prayer nor for meed :⁶
Whom when those knights so froward and for-
lore⁷

Beheld, they her rebuk'd and upbraided sore.
Said Artegall ; " What foul disgrace is this
To so fair Lady, as ye seem in sight,
To blot your beauty, that unblemish'd is,
With so foul blame as breach of faith once plight,
Or change of love for any world's delight ?
Is aught on earth so precious or dear
As praise and honour ? or is aught so bright
And beautiful as glory's beams appear,
Whose goodly light than Phoebus' lamp doth
shine more clear ?

" Why then will ye, fond⁸ Dame, attempted⁹
be

Unto a stranger's love, so lightly plac'd,
For gifts of gold or any worldly glee,
To leave the love that ye before embrac'd,
And let your fame with falsehood be defac'd ?
Fie on the pelf for which good name is sold,
And honour with indignity debas'd !
Dearer is love than life, and fame than gold ;
But dearer than them both your faith once
plighted hold."

Much was the Lady in her gentle mind
Abash'd at his rebuke, that bit her near ;
Nor aught to answer thereunto did find :
But, hanging down her head with heavy cheer,¹⁰
Stood long amaz'd as she amated¹¹ were :
Which Burbon seeing, her again assay'd ;
And, clasping 'twixt his arms, her up did rear
Upon his steed, while she no whit gainsaid :
So bore her quite away, nor well nor ill afraid.¹²

Nathless the Iron Man did still pursue
That rascal many with unpitied spoil ;
Nor ceased not, till all their scatter'd crew
Into the sea he drove quite from that soil,
The which they troubled had with great tur-
moil :

But Artegall, seeing his cruel deed,
Commanded him from slaughter to recoil,¹³
And to his voyage gan again proceed ;
For that the term, approaching fast, required
speed.

¹ Abode: ² Adorned. ³ Robe. ⁴ Sincere.

⁵ Wishes. ⁶ Reward, bribe. ⁷ Devoid of propriety.

⁸ Foolish. ⁹ Tempted. ¹⁰ Mien.

¹¹ Subdued, overawed. ¹² Satisfied. ¹³ Return.

¹⁴ The first limb of this argument is erroneously pre-

CANTO XII.

*Artegall doth Sir Burbon aid,
And blames for changing shield :¹⁴
He with the great Grantorto fights,
And slayeth him in field.*

O SACRED¹⁵ hunger of ambitious minds,
And impotent¹⁶ desire of men to reign !
Whom neither dread of God, that devils binds,
Nor laws of men, that commonweals contain,¹⁷
Nor bands of nature, that wild beasts restrain,
Can keep from outrage and from doing wrong,
Where they may hope a kingdom to obtain :
No faith so firm, no trust can be so strong,
No love so lasting then, that may endure long.

" Witness may Burbon be," whom love of
lordship and of lands made " most faithless and
unsound ;" witness also Geryoneo, who op-
pressed fair Belgé, and Grantorto, " who no less
than all the rest burst out to all outrageousness."
Prosecuting his enterprise against Grantorto,
Artegall comes to the sea-shore, finds a ship all
ready, and in one day reaches the desired coast
—which is occupied by great hosts of men, ranked
to prevent his landing. But soon the foes are
routed by Talus, and fly like doves affrighted
by an eagle ; fresh forces brought against the
newcomers by the tyrant are also scattered by
the terrible flail, till they lie over all the land
" as thick as doth the seed after the sower's
hand ;" and the tyrant gladly hails the message
of Artegall, that he has come not for such
slaughter's sake, but to try with him in single
fight the right of fair Irena's cause. Grantorto
fixes the combat for the next day, and draws
off his people. Artegall spends the night in his
tent, pitched on the open plain ; supplied with
needful entertainment by secret friends of Irena,
who disregard the tyrant's command that none
should entertain the strangers.

The morrow next, that was the dismal day
Appointed for Irena's death before,
So soon as it did to the world display
His cheerful face, and light to men restore,
The heavy maid, to whom none tidings bore
Of Artegall's arrival her to free,
Look'd up with eyes full sad and heart full sore,
Weening her life's last hour then near to be ;
Since no redemption nigh she did nor hear nor
see.

Then up she rose, and on herself did dight¹⁸
Most squalid garments, fit for such a day ;
And with dull count'nance and with doleful
sprite

She forth was brought in sorrowful dismay
For to receive the doom of her decay :¹⁹
But coming to the place, and finding there
Sir Artegall in battailous array,
Waiting his foe, it did her dead heart cheer,
And new life to her lent in midst of deadly fear.

fixed to this canto, to the contents of which it bears no
relation. It agrees with the contents of the preceding
canto.

¹⁵ Violent, uncontrollable.

¹⁶ Dress.

¹⁷ Restrained.

¹⁸ Destruction.

Like as a tender rose in open plain,
That with untimely drought nigh wither'd was,
And hung the head, soon as few drops of rain
Thereon distil and dew her dainty face,
Gins to look up, and with fresh wonted grace
Dispreads the glory of her leaves gay ;
Such was Irena's count'nance, such her case,
When Artegall she saw in that array,
There waiting for the tyrant till it was far day :
Who came at length with proud presumptuous
gait

Into the field, as if he fearless were,
All arm'd in a coat of iron plate
Of great defense to ward the deadly fear ;
And on his head a steel-cap he did wear
Of colour rusty-brown, but sure and strong ;
And in his hand an huge poleaxe did bear,
Whose stele¹ was iron-studded, but not long,
With which he went to fight, to justify his
wrong.

Of stature huge and hideous he was,
Like to a giant for his monstrous height,
And did in strength most sorts of men surpass,
Nor ever any found his match in might ;
Thereto² he had great skill in single fight :
His face was ugly and his count'nance stern,
That could have fray'd one with the very sight,
And gap'd like a gulf when he did gurn ;³
That whether man or monster one could scarce
discern.

Artegall, nothing daunted by his opponent's
frightful aspect, buckled himself to fight ; but
Grantorto's blows were so fast and furious,
that he had to shun them, as a skilful mariner
shuns the peril of a storm by striking his sails.
At last, just as Grantorto reared high his hand
to smite him mortally, Artegall pierced the
giant's side ; but the blow nevertheless de-
scended with such force that the battle-axe
stuck fast in the shield which the Knight had
interposed. In his efforts to release the axe,
the giant dragged Artegall all about the field ;
till the Knight let go the shield, and, while the
giant was encumbered with it, smote him on
the head with his sword ; Chrysaor following up
the stroke, till Grantorto fell to the ground,
and the conqueror cut off his head. All the
people shouted for joy of his success, and threw
themselves at the feet of Irena, whom they
adored as their true liege and princess natural ;
Artegall led her to the royal palace, and estab-
lished her in her kingdom ; then he punished
all the adherents of the dead tyrant, so that
while he stayed with her " not one was left
that durst her once have disobey'd."

During which time that he did there remain,
His study was true justice how to deal,
And day and night employ'd his busy pain
How to reform that ragged commonweal :

¹ Handle.

² Also.

³ Grin, yawn.

⁴ Spenser describes here the features of Lord Grey's government of Ireland ; his severity aroused against him great outcry in England, and exposed him to those attacks of envy and malice of which the poet goes on to speak.

And that same Iron Man, which could reveal
All hidden crimes, through all that realm he
sent
To search out those that us'd to rob and steal,
Or did rebel 'gainst lawful government ;
On whom he did inflict most grievous punish-
ment.⁴

But, ere he could reform it thoroughly,
He through occasion call'd was away
To Faery Court, that of necessity
His course of justice he was forc'd to stay,
And Talus to revoke from the right way,
In which he was that realm for to redress :
But Envy's cloud still dimmeth Virtue's ray !
So, having freed Irena from distress,
He took his leave of her there left in heaviness.

Then as he back return'd from that land,
And there arriv'd again whence forth he set,
He had not pass'd far upon the strand,
When as two old ill-favour'd hags he met,
By the wayside being together set ;
Two grisly creatures ; and, to that their faces
Most foul and filthy were, their garments yet,
Being all ragg'd and tatter'd, their disgraces⁵
Did much the more augment, and made most
ugly cases.

The one of them, that elder did appear,
With her dull eyes did seem to look askew,
That her misshape much help'd ;⁶ and her foul
hair

Hung loose and loathsomely ; thereto⁷ her hue
Was wan and lean, that all her teeth a-rew⁸
And all her bones might through her cheeks be
read ;⁹

Her lips were, like raw leather, pale and blue :
And as she spake, therewith she alavert'd ;
Yet spake she seldom ; but thought more, the
less she said :

Her hands were foul and dirty, never wash'd
In all her life, with long nails over-raught¹⁰
Like puttock's¹¹ claws ; with th' one of which
she scratch'd
Her curs'd head, although it itch'd naught ;
The other held a snake with venom fraught,
On which she fed and gnaw'd hungrily,
As if that long she had not eaten aught ;
That round about her jaws one might descry
The bloody gore and poison dropping loath-
somenly.

Her name was Envy, known well thereby :
Whose nature is to grieve and grudge at all
That ever she sees done praiseworthy ;
Whose sight to her is greatest cross may fall,¹²
And vexeth so, that makes her eat her gall :
For, when she wanteth other thing to eat,
She feeds on her own maw unnatural,
And of her own foul entrails makes her meat ;
Meat fit for such a monster's monstrous diet :¹³

⁵ Deformity.

⁶ Much increased her ugliness.

⁷ Moreover.

⁸ In a row.

¹⁰ Over-reached.

¹¹ That may happen.

⁹ Perceived.

¹² Kite's.

¹³ Diet.

And if she happ'd of any good to hear
That had to any happily betid,¹
Then would she inly fret, and grieve, and tear
Her flesh for fellness² which she inward hid :
But if she heard of ill that any did,
Or harm that any had, then would she make
Great cheer, like one unto a banquet bid ;
And in another's loss great pleasure take,
As she had got thereby and gain'd a great stake.

The other nothing better was than she,
Agreeing in bad will and canker'd kind ;³
But in bad manner they did disagree :
For whatso Envy good or bad did find,
She did conceal, and murder her own mind ;
But this, whatever evil she conceiv'd,
Did spread abroad and throw in th' open wind :
Yet this in all her words might be perceiv'd,
That all she sought was men's good name to
have bereav'd.

For whatsoever good by any said
Or done she heard, she would straightways invent
How to deprave or sland'rously upbraid,
Or to misconstrue of a man's intent,
And turn to ill the thing that well was meant :
Therefore she us'd often to resort
To common haunts, and companies frequent,
To hark what any one did good report,
To blot the same with blame, or wrest in wicked
sort :

And if that any ill she heard of any,
She would it eke,⁴ and make much worse by
telling,

And take great joy to publish it to many ;
That ev'ry matter worse was for her melling :⁵
Her name was hight Detraction, and her dwell-
ing

Was near to Envy, ev'n her neighbour next ;
A wicked hag, and Envy's self excelling
In mischief ; for herself she only vext,
But this same both herself and others eke per-
plext.

Her face was ugly, and her mouth distort,
Foaming with poison round about her gills,
In which her curs'd tongue full sharp and short
Appear'd, like asp's sting, that closely⁶ kills,
Or cruelly does wound whomso she wills :
A distaff in her other hand she had,
Upon the which she little spins, but spills ;⁷
And fains⁸ to weave false tales and leasings⁹
bad,
To throw amongst the good which others had
disprad.¹⁰

These two now had themselves combin'd in one,
And link'd together 'gainst Sir Artegall ;
For whom they waited as his mortal fone,¹¹
How they might make him into mischief fall,
For freeing from their snares Irena thrall :
Besides, unto themselves they gotten had
A monster, which the Blatant Beast¹² men call,

A dreadful fiend, of gods and men y-drad,¹³
Whom they by sleights allur'd and to their pur-
pose lad.¹⁴

Such were these hags, and so unhandsome drest :
Who when they nigh approaching had espied
Sir Artegall return'd from his late quest,¹⁵
They both arose, and at him loudly cried,
As it had been two shepherd's curs had 'sried¹⁶
A ravenous wolf amongst the scatter'd flocks :
And Envy first, as she that first him eyed,
Toward him runs, and with rude flaring locks
About her ears, does beat her breast and fore-
head knocks.

Then from her mouth the gobbet she does take,
The which whilere¹⁷ she was so greedily
Devouring, even that half-gnawen snake,
And at him throws it most despitefully :
The curs'd serpent, though she hungrily
Erst¹⁸ chew'd thereon, yet was not all so dead,
But that some life remain'd secretly ;
And, as he pass'd afore withouten dread,
Bit him behind, that long the mark was to be
read.¹⁹

Then th' other, coming near, gan him revile,
And foully rail, with all she could invent ;
Saying that he had, with unmanly guile
And foul abusion, both his honour blent,²⁰
And that bright sword, the sword of Justice
lent,

Had stain'd with reproachful cruelty
In guiltless blood of many an innocent :
As for Grantorto, him with treachery
And trains having surpris'd, he foully did to die.

Thereto the Blatant Beast, by them set on,
At him began aloud to bark and bay
With bitter rage and fell contenti'on ;
That all the woods and rocks nigh to that way
Began to quake and tremble with dismay ;
And all the air rebellow'd again,
So dreadfully his hundred tongues did bray :
And evermore those hags themselves did pain²¹
To sharpen him, and their own curs'd tongues
did strain.

And, still among, most bitter words they spake,
Most shameful, most unrighteous, most untrue,
That they the mildest man alive would make
Forget his patience, and yield vengeance due
To her, that so false slanders at him threw :
And more to make them pierce and wound
more deep,
She with the sting which in her vile tongue
grew

Did sharpen them, and in fresh poison steep :
Yet he pass'd on, and seem'd of them to take
no keep.²²

But Talus, hearing her so lewdly²³ rail,
And speak so ill of him that well deserv'd,
Would her have chastis'd with his iron flail,
If her Sir Artegall had not preserv'd,

1 Happened.

3 Nature.

5 Meddling.

7 Spoils.

9 Falsehoods.

10 Spread, diffused.

12 The bellowing beast ; Calumny, or popular clamour.

2 Fury.

4 Increase.

6 Secretly.

8 Delights.

11 Foes.

13 Dreaded.

15 Enterprise.

17 Just before.

19 Perceived.

21 Exert.

23 Wickedly

14 Led.

16 Descried.

18 Before.

20 Stained.

22 Heed.

And him forbidden, who his heat¹ observ'd :
So much the more at him still did she scold,
And stones did cast ; yet he for naught would
swerve

From his right course, but still the way did
hold
To Faery Court ; where what him fell shall else
be told.

THE SIXTH BOOK

OF

THE FAERIE QUEEN:

CONTAINING

THE LEGEND OF SIR CALIDORE, OR OF
COURTESY.

THE ways through which my weary steps I guide,
In this delightful land of Faëry,
Are so exceeding spacious and wide,
And sprinkled with such sweet variety
Of all that pleasant is to ear or eye,
That I, nigh ravish'd with rare thoughts' delight,
My tedious travail do forget thereby ;
And, when I gin to feel decay of might,
It strength to me supplies, and cheers my dull'd
sprite.

Such secret comfort and such heav'nly pleasures,
Ye sacred Imps,² that on Parnassus dwell,
And there the keeping have of Learning's trea-
sures

Which do all worldly riches far excel,
Into the minds of mortal men do well,³
And goodly fury⁴ into them infuse ;
Guide ye my footing, and conduct me well
In these strange ways where never foot did use,⁵
Nor none can find but who was taught them by
the Muse :

Reveal to me the sacred nursery
Of Virtue, which with you doth there remain,
Where it in silver bow'r does hidden lie
From view of men and wicked world's disdain ;
Since it at first was by the gods with pain⁶
Planted in earth, being deriv'd at first
From heav'nly seeds of bounty sovereign,⁷
And by them long with careful labour nurst,
Till it to ripeness grew, and forth to honour
burst.

Amongst them all grows not a fairer flow'r
Than is the bloom of comely Courtesy ;
Which though it on a lowly stalk do bow'r,⁸
Yet brancheth forth in brave nobility,
And spreads itself through all civility :
Of which though present age do plenteous seem,
Yet, being match'd with plain antiquity,
Ye will them all but feign'd shows esteem,
Which carry colours fair that feeble eyes mis-
deem :⁹

¹ Command.² Children (of Jove); the Muses.³ Cause to flow.⁴ Frequent, use to go.⁵ Supreme goodness or virtue.⁶ Misjudge, are misled by.⁷ Poetic frenzy.⁸ Difficulty.⁹ Abide, grow.

But, in the trial of true Courtesy,
It's now so far from that which then it was,
That it indeed is naught but forgery,
Fashion'd to please the eyes of them that pass,
Which see not perfect things but in a glass :
Yet is that glass so gay that it can blind
The wisest sight, to think gold that is brass :¹⁰
But Virtue's seat is deep within the mind,
And not in outward shows but inward thoughts
defin'd.

But where shall I in all antiquity
So fair a pattern find, where may be seen
The goodly praise of princely Courtesy,
As in yourself, O sov'reign Lady Queen ?
In whose pure mind, as in a mirror sheen,¹¹
It shows, and with her brightness doth inflame
The eyes of all which thereon fix'd be'n ;
But meriteth indeed a higher name :
Yet so, from low to high, uplifted is your name.

Then pardon me, most dreaded Sovereign,
That from yourself I do this Virtue bring,
And to yourself do it return again :
So from the Ocean all rivers spring,
And tribute back repay as to their king :
Right so from you all goodly virtues well
Into the rest which round about you ring,¹²
Fair Lords and Ladies which about you dwell,
And do adorn your Court where courtesies excel.

CANTO I

*Calidore saves from Malefört**A damsel us'd vild :¹³**Doth vanquish Crudor : and doth make
Briana was more mild.*

OF Court, it seems, men Courtesy do call,
For that it there most useth to abound ;
And well becometh that in prince's hall
That Virtue should be plentifully found,
Which of all goodly manners is the ground,
And root of civil conversation :
Right so in Faery Court it did redound,
Where courteous Knights and Ladies most did
won¹⁴

Of all on earth, and made a matchless paragon.
But 'mongst them all was none more courteous
knight

Than Calidore,¹⁵ belov'd over all :

¹⁰ To think that golden which is but of brass.¹¹ Shining, clear.¹² Vilely.¹³ Encircle.¹⁴ Dwell.¹⁵ Calidore—from the Greek καλος, beautiful, and
διδωμι, I give—means the man gifted with beautiful
qualities (Calliduros), and represents Sir Philip Sidney.

In whom it seems that gentleness of sprite¹
And manners mild were planted natural;
To which he adding comely guise withal
And gracious speech, did steal men's hearts away:
Nathless thereto² he was full stout and tall,
And well approv'd in battailous affray,
That him did much renown, and far his fame
display.

Nor was there knight nor was there lady found,
In Faery Court, but him did dear embrace³
For his fair usage and conditions⁴ sound,
The which in all men's liking gain'd place,
And with the greatest purchas'd greatest grace;
Which he could wisely use, and well apply,
To please the best, and th' evil to embase:⁵
For he loath'd leasing⁶ and base flattery;
And lov'd simple truth and steadfast honesty.

Now, travelling in earnest pursuit of a hard
adventure, he met Sir Artegall returning "half
sad" from his late conquest of Grantorto; and
Artegall, who was an old friend, related his
whole exploit. Calidore, congratulating him,
said that where the other had ended he was
about to begin; for his enterprise was to chase
the Blatant Beast through the world, till it
should be subdued; but he knew not where to
find the monster. Artegall asked what that
Blatant Beast was; and Calidore replied that
it was "a monster bred of hellish race," which
had often annoyed and destroyed good knights
and ladies true.

"Of Cerberus whilom he was begot
And fell Chimæra, in her darksome den,
Through foul commixture of his filthy blot;
Where he was foster'd long in Stygian fen,
Till he to perfect ripeness grew; and then
Into this wicked world he forth was sent
To be the plague and scourge of wretched men:
Whom with vile tongue and venomous intent
He sore doth wound, and bite, and cruelly tor-
ment."

"Then, since the Salvage Island⁷ I did leave,"
Said Artegall, "I such a Beast did see,
The which did seem a thousand tongues to have,
That all in spite and malice did agree,
With which he bay'd and loudly bark'd at me,
As if that he at once would me devour:
But I, that knew myself from peril free,
Did naught regard his malice nor his pow'r;
But he the more his wicked poison forth did
pour."

Calidore gladly and hopefully recognised in
the description the monster whom he sought;
and, after goodly leave-taking, the knights pur-
sued their respective ways. Soon Calidore came
upon a comely squire tied to a tree, whom he
loosed, and then asked how he came into that
dangerous and disgraceful plight. Not through
misedesert, but through misfortune, the squire
replied:

"Not far from hence, upon yon rocky hill,
Hard by a strait there stands a castle strong,
Which doth observe a custom lewd⁸ and ill,
And it hath long maintain'd with mighty
wrong:

For may no knight nor lady pass along
That way (and yet they needs must pass that
way,

By reason of the strait, and rocks among),
But they that lady's locks do shave away,
And that knight's beard, for toll which they for
passage pay."

"A shameful use⁹ as ever I did hear,"
Said Calidore, "and to be overthrown.
But by what means did they at first it rear,¹⁰
And for what cause? Tell, if thou have it
known."

Said then that squire; "The lady which doth
own

This castle is by name Briana hight;
Than which a prouder lady liveth none:
She long time hath dear lov'd a doughty knight,
And sought to win his love by all the means she
might.

"His name is Crudor; who, through high dis-
dain

And proud despite of his self-pleasing mind,
Refus'd hath to yield her love again,
Until a mantle she for him do find
With beards of knights and locks of ladies lin'd:
Which to provide, she hath this castle dight,¹¹
And therein hath a seneschal assign'd,
Call'd Maleffort,¹² a man of mickle might,
Who executes her wicked will with worse
despite.

"He, this same day as I that way did come
With a fair damsel, my belov'd dear,
In execution of her lawless doom
Did set upon us, flying both for fear;
For little boots against him hand to rear:
Me first he took, unable to withstond,¹³
And, while he her pursu'd ev'rywhere,
Till his return unto this tree he bound;
Nor wot I surely whether he her yet have
found."

While they spoke, they heard a loud and
rueful shriek, and saw the carl, Maleffort, with
hand unblest, "hauling that maiden by the
yellow hair," nigh tearing her garments from
her snowy breast and her locks from her head.
Calidore at once hastened towards him, and de-
manded that he should let go that "misgotten
weft." The seneschal, turning fiercely against
Calidore, tauntingly asked him whether for that
maid he would give his beard, "though it but
little be;" and he laid on hideous strokes with
such importune might, that the Knight stag-
gered, and had to fight on the defensive, till his
adversary grew wearied. Then,

Like as a water-stream, whose swelling source

¹ Nobility of spirit.

² Esteem.

³ Disgrace, abase.

⁴ Falschood.

⁵ Also.

⁶ Qualities.

⁷ The island of Irena—Ireland.

⁸ Wicked, vile.

⁹ Usage.

¹⁰ Erected.

¹¹ Evil Effort or Strength.

¹² Erected.

¹³ Withstand.

Shall drive a mill, within strong banks is pent,
And long restrained of his ready course ;
So soon as passage is unto him lent,
Breaks forth, and makes his way more violent ;
Such was the fury of Sir Calidore :
When once he felt his foeman to relent,
He fiercely him pursued, and pressed sore ;
Who as he still decay'd, so he increased more.

Unable to withstand "the heavy burden of his dreadful might," Maleffort fled to the castle, "for dread of death" calling aloud to the warder to open the gate hastily ; but Calidore pursued so closely, that just as the gate was opened he cleft the flying foe to the chin, and the carcase, tumbling down within the door, "did choke the entrance with a lump of sin." Calidore entered, and slew the porter :

With that the rest the which the castle kept
About him flock'd, and hard at him did lay ;
But he them all from him full lightly swept,
As doth a steer, in heat of summer's day,
With his long tail the brizes¹ brush away.
Thence passing forth into the hall he came,
Where of the Lady's self in sad dismay
He was y-met, who with uncomely shame
Gan him salute, and foul upbraid with faulty blame :

"False traitor Knight," said she, "no knight at all,

But scorn of arms ! that hast with guilty hand
Murder'd my men, and slain my seneschal ;
Now comest thou to rob my house unmann'd,²
And spoil myself, that cannot thee withstand ?
Yet doubt thou not, but that some better knight
Than thou, that shall thy treason understand,
Will it avenge, and pay thee with thy right :
And if none do, yet shame shall thee with shame requite."

Much was the Knight abashed at that word ;
Yet answer'd thus ; "Not unto me the shame,
But to the shameful doer it afford.
Blood is no blemish ; for it is no blame
To punish those that do deserve the same ;
But they that break bands of civility,
And wicked customs make, those do defame
Both noble arms and gentle courtesy :
No greater shame to man than inhumanity."

Calidore therefore exhorted the lady, "for dread of shame," to forego the evil custom which she maintained ; but she wrathfully disdained his courteous lore, and, on her love's behalf, bade him be defied. Calidore held it no indignity to take defiance at her word ; and declared that, were any there who would abet the lady's cause with his sword, "he might it dear abide." Briana sent to Crudor a dwarf bearing a gold ring, "a privy token which between them past," desiring him to come to her rescue ; and meantime the discourteous lady treated her unwelcome guest with scornful pride and foul indignity. But he well endured her womanish disdain, which became the more bitter when, in

the morning, the dwarf returned with the promise of Crudor that before he tasted bread he would succour her, and "alive or dead her foe deliver up into her hand." Calidore issued forth to meet his enemy, whom he soon descried pricking fast towards the castle ; and, without pause or parley, they "met in midst of the plain with so fell fury and dispiteous force," that horses and men all rolled to ground together. It was some time before they recovered from the shock : but then they commenced a furious conflict on foot. After long tracing and traversing to and fro, and many grievous wounds on both sides, Calidore anticipated a stroke of his adversary by a blow on the helmet, which, vigorously followed up, cast him grovelling to the ground. The Knight would have instantly slain his prostrate foe, but that Crudor entreated mercy.

With that his mortal hand a while he stay'd :
And, having somewhat calm'd his wrathful heat

With goodly patience, thus he to him said ;
"And is the boast of that proud Lady's threat,
That menac'd me from the field to beat,
Now brought to this ? By this now may ye learn

Strangers no more so rudely to entreat ;
But put away proud look and usage stern,
The which shall naught to you but foul dishonour earn.

"For nothing is more blameful to a knight,
That court'sy doth as well as arms profess,
However strong and fortunate in fight,
Than the reproach of pride and cruelty :
In vain he seeketh others to suppress,
Who hath not learn'd himself first to subdue :
All flesh is frail and full of fickleness,
Subject to Fortune's chance, still changing new ;
What haps to-day to me, to-morrow may to you.

"Who will not mercy unto others shew,
How can he mercy ever hope to have ?
To pay each with his own is right and due :
Yet since ye mercy now do need to crave,
I will it grant, your hopeless life to save,
With these conditions which I will propound :
First, that ye better shall yourself behave
Unto all errant knights, whereso on ground ;
Next, that ye ladies aid in ev'ry stead and stound."³

Crudor gladly promised to obey these injunctions ; and Calidore, suffering him to rise, made him swear "by his own sword, and by the cross thereon," to take Briana, without dower or condition, for his wife. Then he called forth "the sad Briana, which all this beheld," and cheered her with news of the agreement to which he had compelled Crudor.

Whereof she now more glad than sorry erst,⁴
All overcome with infinite affect⁵
For his exceeding courtesy, that pierc'd

¹ Breeze-flies, gadflies.

² Undefended by men.

³ In every place and at every time.

⁴ Before.

⁵ Affection.

Her stubborn heart with inward deep effect,
Before his feet herself she did project;¹
And, him adoring as her life's dear lord,
With all due thanks and dutiful respect,
Herself acknowledg'd bound for that accord²
By which he had to her both life and love re-
stor'd.

"So all returning to the castle glad," were
most joyfully entertained by Briana; who freely
gave Sir Calidore that castle for his pain. But
he would retain "nor land nor fee for hire of
his good deed;" giving them to the squire and
the lady whom he had lately freed from the
seneschal; and, when his wounds were healed,
"to his first quest³ he pass'd forth along."

CANTO II.

*Calidore sees young Tristram slay
A proud discourteous knight:
He makes him squire, and of him learns
His state and present plight.*

WHAT virtue is so fitting for a knight,
Or for a lady whom a knight should love,
As Courtesy; to bear themselves aright
To all of each degree as should behove?
For whether they be plac'd high above
Or low beneath, yet ought they well to know
Their good;⁴ that none them rightly may re-
prove

Of rudeness for not yielding what they owe:
Great skill it is such duties timely to bestow.

Thereto great help Dame Nature's self doth
lend:

For some so goodly gracious are by kind,⁵
That ev'ry action doth them much commend,
And in the eyes of men great liking find;
Which others that have greater skill in mind,
Though they enforce themselves, cannot attain:
For ev'ry thing, to which one is inclin'd,
Doth best become and greatest grace doth gain:
Yet praise likewise deserve good thews enforc'd
with pain.⁶

That well in courteous Calidore appeared,
whose every act and deed was like enchantment,
stealing away the heart through the eyes and
the ears. Pursuing his quest, he spied a tall
young man fighting on foot against a mounted
knight; and beside them stood a lady fair in
foul array. Before he could come up, Calidore
saw, to his great wonder, the knight killed by
the youth.

Him steadfastly he mark'd, and saw to be
A goodly youth of amiable grace,
Yet but a slender slip, that scarce did see
Yet sev'nteen years, but tall and fair of face,

That sure he deem'd him born of noble race:
All in a woodman's jacket he was clad
Of Lincoln green, belaid⁷ with silver lace;
And on his head a hood with aiglets⁸ sprad,⁹
And by his side his hunter's horn he hanging had.

Buskins he wore of costliest cordwain,¹⁰
Pink'd upon gold,¹¹ and pal'd part per part,¹²
As then the guise¹³ was for each gentle swain:
In his right hand he held a trembling dart,
Whose fellow he before had sent apart;
And in his left he held a sharp boar-spear,
With which he went to lance the salvage heart
Of many a lion and of many a bear,
That first unto his hand in chase did happen near.

Calidore inquired of the "gentle swain," why,
being no knight, he had embrued his too bold
hand in the blood of a knight. The youth replied
that, though loth to have broken the law of
arms, he would break it again, rather than let
himself be struck while he had two arms to
avenge himself. Not he, but the dead knight,
had given the first offence; for as he was rang-
ing the forest in pursuit of game, he had met
the knight, on horseback, while his lady "on
her fair feet by his horse-side did pass through
thick and thin, unfit for any dame;" and, if she
lagged, her lord would thump her forward with
his spear. Moved with indignation, the young
hunter said, he had blamed the knight for
such cruelty to a lady, whom with kind usage
he should rather have taken up behind. The
knight had angrily threatened to chastise the
remonstrant, "as doth t' a child pertain;" and,
finding his scornful taunts flung back in his
teeth, had struck the youth with his spear.
The youth had responded by throwing, "not in
vain," a slender dart, the fellow of the one he
bore, which smote the knight underneath the
heart, so that he soon died. Hearing the youth's
tale,

Much did Sir Calidore admire his speech,
Temper'd so well; but more admir'd the stroke
That through the mails had made so strong a
breach

Into his heart, and had so sternly wroke¹⁴
His wrath on him that first occasion broke:¹⁵
Yet rested not, but farther gan inquire
Of that same lady, whether what he spoke
Were soothly¹⁶ so, and that th' unrighteous ire
Of her own knight had given him his own due
hire.¹⁷

She could deny nothing, and cleared the
stripling of the imputed blame; while Sir
Calidore also released him from all censure, for
what he had spoken, he had spoken to save her,
what he had done, he had done to save himself;
and against both the dead knight had wrought
unknightly shame, "for knights and all men
this by nature have, toward all womenkind

¹ Throw.² Agreement.³ Enterprise.⁴ Their proper and seemly deportment.⁵ Nature.⁶ Good manners or qualities exercised with difficulty.⁷ Adorned.⁸ Aiguillettes, tags.⁹ Covered.¹⁰ Cordovan leather.¹¹ Worked with gold in small holes.¹² Intersected with "pales" or stripes.¹³ Fashion.¹⁴ Wreaked.¹⁵ First provoked the quarrel.¹⁶ Truly.¹⁷ Retribution.

them kindly to behave." Calidore then asked the lady to tell what had caused the cruel conduct of her knight; and, though full loth "to raise a living blame against the dead," she complied. As they rode together, she said, they had found in a forest glade a lady and a knight "in joyous jolliment." Her own knight had coveted the other lady, and, finding his own dame an encumbrance, had bidden her alight; but when she showed reluctance to leave her love so suddenly, he had thrown her from his steed by force, and ridden hard against the other knight. He, though all disarmed, for gentle dalliance with his lady, had refused to quit his love, and demanded time to don his arms, that he might fight for her. But the dead knight, fierce and hot, had given him no time, but pierced him with his spear. Meanwhile the other lady had hidden herself in the grove; the triumphant aggressor had sought her in vain; and, forced at last to abandon the search and continue his journey with his own lady, he had, to gratify his rage, bestowed upon her the unknightly usage for which the young huntsman had taken vengeance. Calidore then pronounced that what had befallen the dead knight clearly befell him by his own fault:

Then turning back unto that gentle boy,
Which had himself so stoutly well acquit;
Seeing his face so lovely stern and coy,
And hearing th' answers of his pregnant wit,
He prais'd it much, and much admir'd it;
That sure he ween'd¹ him born of noble blood,
With whom those graces did so goodly fit:
And, when he long had him beholding stood,
He burst into these words, as to him seem'd good;

"Fair gentle swain, and yet as stout as fair,
That in these woods amongst the nymphs dost
won,²

Which daily may to thy sweet looks repair,
As they are wont unto Latona's son³
After his chase on woody Cynthus⁴ done;
Well may I certes such an one thee read,⁵
As by thy worth thou worthily hast won,
Or surely born of some heroic seed,
That in thy face appears and gracious goodli-
head.⁶

"But, should it not displease thee it to tell
(Unless thou in these woods thyself conceal
For love amongst the woody gods to dwell),
I would thyself require thee to reveal;
For dear affection and unfeign'd zeal
Which to thy noble personage I bear,
And wish thee grow in worship⁷ and great weal:
For, since the day that arms I first did rear,⁸
I never saw in any greater hope appear."

The youth replies that he is a Briton born,

¹ Thought.

² Dwell.

³ Apollo.

⁴ Mount Cynthus, in the island of Delos, where Apollo and Diana were born; hence these deities were respectively termed "Cynthus" and "Cynthia."

⁵ Declare, believe.

⁶ Comeliness.

⁷ Honour.

⁸ Assume.

⁹ Suspicious.

¹⁰ A man esteemed sage.

son of a king, though through fate or fortune he has lost his country and his crown.

"And Tristram is my name; the only heir
Of good king Meliográs, which did reign
In Cornwall till that he, through life's despair,
Untimely died, before I did attain
Ripe years of reason, my right to maintain:
After whose death his brother, seeing me
An infant, weak a kingdom to sustain,
Upon him took the royal high degree,
And sent me, where him list, instructed for
to be.

"The widow queen my mother, which that hight
Fair Emmeline, conceiving then great fear
Of my frail safety, resting in the might
Of him that did the kingly sceptre bear,
Whose jealous dread, enduring not a peer,
Is wont to cut off all that doubt may breed,
Thought best away me to remove somewhere
Into some foreign land, where as no need
Of dreaded danger might his doubtful⁹ humour
feed.

"So, taking counsel of a wise man read,¹⁰
She was by him advis'd to send me quite
Out of the country wherein I was bred,
The which the fertile Lioness¹¹ is hight,
Into the Land of Faery, where no wight
Should weet¹² of me, nor work me any wrong:
To whose wise read¹³ she heark'ning, sent me
straight

Into this land, where I have wonn'd¹⁴ thus long
Since I was ten years old, now grown to stature
strong.

"All which my days I have not lewdly¹⁵ spent,
Nor spilt¹⁶ the blossom of my tender years
In idleness; but, as was convenient,
Have train'd been with many noble feres¹⁷
In gentle thews and such like seemly leres:¹⁸
'Mongst which my most delight hath always been
To hunt the salvage chase, amongst my peers,¹⁹
Of all that rangeth in the forest green,
Of which none is to me unknown that e'er was
seen.

"Nor there is hawk which mantleth²⁰ her on
perch,
Whether high tow'ring or accosting²¹ low,
But I the measure of her flight do search,
And all her prey and all her diet know:
Such be our joys which in these forests grow:
Only the use of arms, which most I joy,
And fitteth most for noble swain to know,
I have not tasted yet; yet past a boy,
And being now high time these strong joints to
employ."

Therefore Tristram entreats Calidore to make him a squire without delay, and give him the spoil of the dead knight, "these goodly gilden

¹¹ A country represented in the old British legends as once contiguous to Cornwall, and extending from the Land's End to the Scilly Isles, but long ago submerged.

¹² Know.

¹³ Counsel.

¹⁴ Dwelt.

¹⁵ Viciously, unprofitably.

¹⁶ Wasted.

¹⁷ Companions.

¹⁸ Lessons, arts.

¹⁹ Fellows, equals.

²⁰ Rests with outspread wings.

²¹ Stooping.

arms which I have won in fight." Sir Calidore, admiringly and joyfully, grants the request :

There him he caus'd to kneel, and made to swear
Faith to his knight, and truth to ladies all,
And never to be recreant for fear
Of peril, or of aught that might befall :
So he him dubb'd, and his squire did call.
Full glad and joyous then young Tristram grew ;
Like as a flow'r, whose silken leaves small,
Long shut up in the bud from heaven's view,
At length breaks forth, and broad displays his
smiling hue.*

After long converse, Calidore "betook him to depart;" and Child Tristram prayed that he might attend him on his adventure. The Knight was greatly delighted by the request, but had to refuse it, since he had vowed to his dread Sovereign to pursue his enterprise alone. He entrusted, however, to the new-made squire the care of the desolate lady, which he joyfully accepted; "and Calidore forth pass'd to his former pain."

But Tristram then, despoiling that dead knight
Of all those goodly implements of praise,
Long fed his greedy eyes with the fair sight
Of the bright metal shining like sun rays ;
Handling and turning them a thousand ways :
And, after having them upon him dight,¹
He took that lady, and her up did raise
Upon the steed of her own late dead knight :
So with her march'd forth, as she did him
behight.²

Before he had travelled many a mile, Calidore found the unarmed knight, who had been wounded by Tristram's discourteous adversary, weltering in his blood ; and by him, lamenting, sat his woeful lady. The Knight, struck with sorrow, sought to comfort the lady, and drew from her the tale of her grief.

When Calidore this rueful story had
Well understood, he gan of her demand
What manner wight he was, and how y-clad,
Which had this outrage wrought with wicked
hand.

She then, like as she best could understand,
Him thus describ'd, to be of stature large,
Clad all in gilden arms, with azure band
Quarter'd athwart, and bearing in his targe
A lady on rough waves row'd in a summer
barge.

Calidore knew that it was the same knight whom Tristram had slain ; bade the lady be glad that the worker of her lover's pain was fully punished ; and besought her to cast aside her grief and think how her lover might be cured. Embarrassed as to the means by which he might be carried thence, she was set at ease by the proposal of the Knight, that each should bear a part of the burden.

¹ Girt, dressed. ² Direct. ³ Divided. ⁴ Dwell.

⁵ Chancer, in *The Wife of Bath's Tale* (page 81) :—

"Look who that is most virtuous alway,
Prive and apert, and most intendeth ay

So off he did his shield, and downward laid
Upon the ground, like to a hollow bier ;
And pouring balm, which he had long purvey'd,
Into his wounds, him up thereon did rear,
And 'twixt them both with parted³ pains did
bear,
'Twixt life and death, not knowing what was
done :
Thence they him carried to a castle near,
In which a worthy ancient knight did won :⁴
Where what ensued shall in next canto be be-
gun.

CANTO III.

*Calidore brings Priscilla home ;
Pursues the Blatant Beast :
Saves Sirena, whilst Calepine
By Turpine is oppress.*

TRUE is, that whilom that good poet⁵ said,
The gentle mind by gentle deeds is known :
For a man by nothing is so well bewray'd
As by his manners ; in which plain is shown
Of what degree and what race he is grown :
For seldom seen a trotting stallion get
An ambling colt, that is his proper own :
So seldom seen that one in baseness⁶ set
Doth noble courage show with courteous manners
met.

But evermore the contrary has been experienced, "that gentle blood will gentle manners breed ;" witness the courteous deed of Calidore, who bore the wounded knight on his back to the castle, the owner of which, Aldus, was the father of the luckless man. In his day he had been a brave knight ; and now, though weak age had dimmed his candlelight, still he was courteous to every wight, "and lov'd all who did to arms incline." Great was his wailing over his "sorry boy," that brought such hope to his hoary hair, and turned his expected joy to such sad annoy.

"Such is the weakness of all mortal hope ;
So tickle⁷ is the state of earthly things ;
That, ere they come unto their aim'd scope,
They fall too short of our frail reckonings,
And bring us bale and bitter sorrowings,
Instead of comfort which we should embrace :
This is the state of Kaisers and of Kings !
Let none, therefore, that is in meaner place,
Too greatly grieve at any his unlucky case !"

The good old knight, however, suppressed his sorrow to entertain and cheer his guests ; but the lady would be comforted by naught, sighing and sorrowing for her lover dear, and afflicting herself by the thought of the dishonour of her name.

For she was daughter to a noble lord

To do the gentle deed's that he can ;
And take him for the greatest gentleman."

⁶ Low estate.

⁷ Fickle, unstable.

Which dwelt thereby, who sought her to affy¹
To a great peer ; but she did disaccord,²
Nor could her liking to his love apply,
But lov'd this fresh young knight who dwelt her
nigh,

The lusty Aladine, though meaner born
And of less livehood and hability,³
Yet full of valour, the which did adorn
His meanness⁴ much, and make her th' other's
riches scorn.

So, having both found fit occasion,
They met together in that luckless glade ;
Where that proud knight, in his presumption,
The gentle Aladine did erst invade,⁵
Being unarm'd and set in secret shade.
Whereof she now bethinking, gan t' advise
How great a hazard she at erst had made
Of her good fame ; and farther gan devise
How she the blame might salve with colour'd
disguise.

Calidore did his utmost to comfort her, and
the old knight seconded his efforts ; until time
came for rest, and the wearied Knight, brought
to his chamber, slept soundly all night. Far
otherwise was it with the fair Priscilla (so the
lady was called), who all night watched her
wounded love, and washed his wounds so well
in her tears, that at last she drove away the
peril of death which hung over him. Then, with
mutual tears, they consulted how the lady's
hazarded good name might be preserved ; " for
which the only help now left them last seem'd
to be Calidore ; all other helps were past."

Him they did deem, as sure to them he seem'd,
A courteous knight, and full of faithful trust ;⁶
Therefore to him their cause they best esteem'd
Whole to commit, and to his dealing just.
Early, so soon as Titan's beams forth brust⁷
Through the thick clouds, in which they steep'd
lay

All night in darkness, dull'd with iron rust,
Calidore, rising up as fresh as day,
Gan freshly him address unto his former way.

But first he visited the wounded knight, who
seized the occasion to " break to him the for-
tunes of his love and all his disadvantages to
unfold." Calidore in the end pledged his honour
as a knight to conduct the lady safe to her father's
castle ; and by and by he passed forth with her
in fair array, " fearless who aught did think or
ought did say, since his own thought he knew
most clear from wite." ⁸ As they went on
their way, he devised this stratagem, to give
colour to the lady's story :

Straight to the carcase of that knight he went
(The cause of all this evil, who was slain
The day before, by just avengement
Of noble Tristram), where it did remain ;
There he the neck thereof did cut in twain,
And took with him the head, the sign of shame.

¹ Affiance. ³ Dissent from the arrangement.
² Smaller revenue and possession.
⁴ Humble estate. ⁵ A little while ago attack.
⁶ Trustworthiness. ⁷ Burst, broke.
⁸ Blame. ⁹ The stranger knight's.

So forth he pass'd thorough that day's pain,
Till to that lady's father's house he came ;
Most pensive man, through fear what of his
child became.

There Calidore presented the lady to her
father, " most perfect pure, and guiltless inno-
cent of blame, as he did on his knighthood
swear," since he had freed her from fear of a
discourteous knight, who was bearing her away
by force, and whose head he adduced in proof
that the theft had been punished. The father
overflowed with joy and thanks ; and Calidore
made a brief stay in the castle, after which he
prosecuted his first adventure. Erelong he came
upon a jolly knight resting unarmed in covert
shade beside his lady : and after courteous apo-
logies for the interruption of their quiet love's
delight, the two knights sat down to relate to
each other their adventures :

Of which whilst they discours'd both together,
The fair Serena (so his⁹ lady hight),
Allur'd with mildness of the gentle weather,
And pleasance of the place, the which was dight¹⁰
With divers flow'rs distinct with rare delight,
Wander'd about the fields, as liking led
Her wavering lust¹¹ after her wand'ring sight,
To make a garland to adorn her head,
Without suspect¹² of ill or danger's hidden dread.

All suddenly, out of the forest near,
The Blatant Beast, forth rushing unaware,
Caught her, thus loosely wand'ring here and
there,

And in his wide great mouth away her bare,
Crying aloud to show her sad misfare¹³
Unto the knights, and calling oft for aid ;
Who, with the horror of her hapless care,¹⁴
Hastily starting up, like men dismay'd,
Ran after fast to rescue the distress'd maid.

The Beast, with their pursuit incited more,
Into the wood was bearing her space
For to have spoil'd her ;¹⁵ when Calidore,
Who was more light of foot and swift in chase,
Him overtook in midst of his race ;
And, fiercely charging him with all his might,
Forc'd to forego his prey there in the place,
And to betake himself to fearful flight ;
For he durst not abide with Calidore to fight.

Who nath'less, when he the lady saw
There left on ground, though in full evil plight,
Yet knowing that her knight now near did draw,
Stay'd not to succour her in that affright,
But follow'd fast the monster in his flight :
Through woods and hills he follow'd him so fast,
That he n'ould¹⁶ let him breathe nor gather
sprite,¹⁷

But forc'd him gape and gasp, with dread aghast,
As if his lungs and lights were nigh asunder
brast.¹⁸

Sir Calepine—so the stranger knight was called
—came up by and by, to find Serena lying on

¹⁰ Adorned. ¹¹ Inclination.
¹² Suspicion. ¹³ Misfortune.
¹⁴ Affliction. ¹⁵ Made a prey of her.
¹⁶ Would not. ¹⁷ Breath.
¹⁸ Burst.

the ground, all bloody and wounded from the monster's teeth. Lifting her in his arms, he restored her to consciousness, set her on his steed, and went on foot beside her in quest of some place of safety where she might remain till her wounds were healed. At nightfall he spied a pleasant place "down in a dale foreby a river's side;" but, making wearily thitherward in hope, he found the intervening river hardly passable on foot, and lingered a while in perplexity. Meantime an armed knight rode up, accompanied by a lady; and, as they were about to pass the ford, Calepine courteously besought the knight, "for safe conducting of his sickly dame," to take him up behind him on his steed. But the other, with rude revilings, bade Calepine,—“thou peasant knight,”—since he had lost his steed with shame, bear the lady on his back with pleasing pain, and prove his manhood on the billows vain. The lady of the rude knight reproved his speech, and would have taken Calepine on her own palfrey, but that, in his inward wrath, he refused the offer with thanks, and carelessly into the river went—through which, with one hand staying his lady up, with the other staying himself by the end of his spear, he safely won his way to the farther side. Meantime the churlish knight stood on the bank taunting him as he struggled with the flood; and no sooner had Calepine reached the safe shore, than he defied the “unknightly knight, the blemish of that name, and blot of all that arms upon them take,” to combat on foot. But the dastard only laughed out the challenge, and, heedless of Calepine's fury, rode away to the castle, of which he was the lord. To the same place Calepine bent his steps, and at the gate mildly entreated lodging for his sick charge. But the prayer was churlishly refused; for the lord of the castle, Sir Turpine, was “terrible and stern in all assays to ev'ry errant knight, because of one that wrought him foul despite.” Calepine marvelled why, if he was so valiant, he should be so stern to strangers; “for seldom yet did living creature see that courtesy and manhood ever disagree.”

“But go thy ways to him, and from me say
That here is at his gate an errant knight,
That house-room craves; yet would be loth t'
assay

The proof of battle now in doubtful night,
Or courtesy with rudeness to requite:
Yet, if he needs will fight, crave leave till morn,
And tell withal the lamentable plight
In which this lady languisheth forlorn,
That pity craves, as he of woman was y-born.”

But Sir Turpine, “sitting with his lady then at board,” rejected the challenge, and reviled the challenger and his love; heedless of the entreaties of his lady, named Blandina, that the strangers might at least be lodged for that night. Calepine had no alternative but to swallow his rage, and lay his lady “underneath a bush to

sleep cover'd with cold, and wrapt in wretchedness;” while all night he wept and kept wary watch by her side.

The morrow next, so soon as joyous day
Did show itself in sunny beams bedight,¹
Serena, full of dolorous dismay,
“Twixt darkness dread and hope of living light,
Uprear'd her head to see that cheerful sight.
Then Calepine, however inly wroth,
And greedy to avenge that vile despite,
Yet for the feeble lady's sake, full loth
To make there longer stay, forth on his journey
go'th.

He go'th on foot all arm'd by her side,
Upstaying still herself upon her steed,
Being unable else alone to ride;
So sore her sides, so much her wounds did bleed:
Till that at length, in his extremest need,
He chanc'd far off an arm'd knight to spy
Pursuing him apace with greedy speed;
Whom well he wist² to be some enemy,
That meant to make advantage of his misery.

Calepine awaited his approach, and soon recognised the man who yesterday had abused and shamed him with such scornful pride; and he had but time to place himself on his guard, when Turpine ran fiercely against him, pursuing him from place to place, “with full intent him cruelly to kill.” Calepine could only shelter himself behind his lady, who continually besought the assailant “to spare her knight, and rest with reason pacified.” But Turpine, only the more enraged, now took Calepine at an advantage, and struck him through the shoulder with his spear. The knight's life was in the utmost jeopardy from his cowardly foe's pursuit, when he was rescued by a wondrous chance; “such chances oft exceed all human thought!”

CANTO IV.

*Calepine by a Salvage Man
From Turpine rescued is;
And, whilst an Infant from a bear
He saves, his Love doth miss.*

LIKE as a ship, with dreadful storm long tost,
Having spent all her masts and her ground-hold,³
Now far from harbour, likely to be lost,
At last some fisher-bark doth near behold,
That giveth comfort to her courage cold;
Such was the state of this most courteous
Knight,

Being oppress'd by that faitour⁴ bold,
That he remain'd in most perilous plight,
And his sad lady left in pitiful affright:

Till that, by fortune passing all foresight,
A Salvage Man, which in those woods did won,⁵
Drawn with that lady's loud and piteous
shriek,⁶

¹ Bedecked.² Knew.³ Ground-tackle; cables and anchors.⁴ Traitor. malefactor.⁵ Dwell.⁶ Shrieking.

Towârd the same incessantly did run
To understand what there was to be done :
There he this most discourteous craven found
As fiercely yet, as when he first begun,
Chasing the gentle Calepine around,
Nor sparing him the more for all his grievous
wound.

The Salvage Man, that never till this hour
Did taste of pity, neither gentless knew,
Seeing his sharp assault and cruel stowre,¹
Was much emmovèd at his peril's view,
That ev'n his ruder heart began to rue,²
And feel compassion of his evil plight,
Against his foe that did him so pursue ;
From whom he meant to free him, if he might,
And him avenge of that so villainous despite.

Yet arms or weapon had he none to fight,
Nor knew the use of warlike instruments,
Save such as sudden rage him lent to smite ;
But naked, without needful vestiments
To clad his corpse with meet habiliments,
He carèd not for dint of sword nor spear,
No more than for the stroke of straws or bents :³
For from his mother's womb, which him did
bear,

He was invulnerable made by magic lear.⁴

Staying not to think which way were best to
assail his foe, the Wild Man rushed furiously
against Turpine ; who smote him on the breast
with his spear, making him recoil, yet without
drawing blood or inflicting wound. " Like to a
tiger that hath miss'd his prey," the Wild Man
flew again at Turpine with fresh rage, and fixed
upon his shield a tenacious grip. After long
struggle, the knight was forced to forsake both
spear and shield, and flee for sheer terror,
shrieking under the close pursuit of the savage.
At last the pursuer saw his labour vain, and
returned to Serena and Calepine ; finding the
knight bleeding sorely, and the lady " fearfully
aghast," both by the sharpness of her rankling
wound, and through fear of the Salvage Man,
against whom she was now defenceless. Serena
could only recommend herself " to God's sole
grace, whom she did oft implore to send her
succour, being of all hope forlore."

But the Wild Man, contrâry to her fear,
Came to her creeping like a fawning hound ;
And by rude tokens made to her appear
His deep compassion of her doleful stound ;⁵
Kissing his hands, and crouching to the ground ;
For other language had he none, nor speech,
But a soft murmur and confusèd sound
Of senseless words (which Nature did him
teach

T' express his passions) which his reason did
empeach :⁶

And coming likewise to the wounded Knight,
When he beheld the streams of purple blood
Yet flowing fresh, as movèd with the sight,

He made great moan after his salvage mood ;
And, running straight into the thickest wood,
A certain herb from thence unto him brought,
Whose virtue he by use well understood ;
The juice whereof into his wound he wrought,
And stopp'd the bleeding straight, ere he it
stanchèd thought.

Then, taking up that recreant's shield and spear,
Which erst he left,⁷ he signs unto them made
With him to wend unto his winning⁸ near ;
To which he easily did them persuade.
Far in the forest, by a hollow glade
Cover'd with mossy shrubs, which, spreading
broad,
Did underneath them make a gloomy shade,
Where foot of living creature never trod,
Nor scarce wild beasts durst come, there was
this wight's abode.

Thither he brought these unacquainted guests ;
To whom fair semblance,⁹ as he could, he show'd
By signs, by looks, and all his other gestic :¹⁰
But the bare ground, with hoary moss be-
strow'd,
Must be their bed ; their pillow was unsow'd ;
And the fruits of the forest was their feast :
For their bad steward neither plough'd nor
sow'd,
Nor fed on flesh, nor ever of wild beast
Did taste the blood, obeying Nature's first be-
hest.¹¹

Yet, howsoever base¹² and mean it were,
They took it well, and thankèd God for all,
Which had them freed from that deadly fear,
And sav'd from being to that caitiff thrall.
Here they of force (as fortune now did fall)
Compellèd were themselves a while to rest,
Glad of that easement, though it were but small ;
That, having there their wounds a while redrest,
They might the abler be to pass unto the rest.

During which time that Wild Man did apply
His best endeavour, and his daily pain,¹³
In seeking all the woods both far and nigh
For herbs to dress their wounds ; still seeming
fain¹⁴

When aught he did, that did their liking gain.
So as ere long he had that Knight's wound
Recurèd well, and made him whole again :
But that same lady's hurt no herb he found
Which could redress, for it was inwardly un-
sound.

One day, when Calepine, now grown strong,
had gone forth unarmed " to take the air and
hear the thrush's song," he saw a cruel bear
which bore an infant betwixt his blood-be-
sprinkled jaws. The loud and shrill cries of
the child, filling all the woods with piteous
plaints, drew Calepine to pursue the beast—
all the more nimbly, that he had left his armour
behind, and felt like a hawk that is freed from
bells and jesses ;¹⁵ so that " him seem'd his feet

¹ Calamity. ² Feel pity. ³ Dried-up grass.

⁴ Skill, lore. ⁵ Grief, calamity.

⁶ Obstruct, obscure.

⁷ Which he had lately abandoned. ⁸ Dwelling.

⁹ Demeanour. ¹⁰ Acts, gestures. ¹¹ Commandment.

¹² Lowly.

¹³ Labour.

¹⁴ Glad.

¹⁵ Straps, thongs, by which a hawk was attached to the wrist.

did fly, and in their speed delight." At last he overtook the weary bear, which dropped its prey, and turned upon him; gaping full wide "with greedy force and fury."

But the bold Knight, no whit thereat dismay'd,
But catching up in hand a ragged stone
Which lay thereby (so Fortune did him aid)
Upon him ran, and thrust it all at one¹
Into his gaping throat, that made him groan
And gasp for breath, that he nigh chok'd was,
Being unable to digest that bone;
Nor could it upward come, nor downward pass,
Nor could he brook the coldness of the stony
mass.

Whom when as he thus cumber'd did behold,
Striving in vain, that nigh his bowels brast,²
He with him clos'd, and, laying mighty hold
Upon his throat, did gripe his gorge so fast,
That wanting breath him down to ground he cast;
And, then oppressing him with urgent pain,
Ere long enforc'd to breathe his utmost blast,³
Gnashing his cruel teeth at him in vain,
And threat'ning his sharp claws, now wanting
pow'r to strain.

Taking in his arms the little babe, the Knight found it unharmed by the teeth of the beast, and then sought, but in vain, the way back to the Wild Man's abode. All day he wandered about in idle search, "with weary travel and uncertain toil;" while the infant, "crying for food, him greatly did offend." But about sunset he got out of the forest, into the open campaign; and, while looking about for "some place of succour to content his mind," he heard the voice of a woman, complaining of fate and reviling fortune. Approaching, Calepine learned from the unfortunate lady, Matilda by name, that she was the wife of bold Sir Bruin, who had lately conquered all that land from the giant Cormorant, in three great battles—but who, now possessed of the land, was grievously afflicted by the fact that he was childless.

"But most my lord is griev'd herewithal,
And makes exceeding moan, when he does think
That all this land unto his foe shall fall,
For which he long in vain did sweat and swink,⁴
That now the same he greatly doth forthink.⁵
Yet was it said, 'There should to him a son
Be gotten, not begotten; which should drink
And dry up all the water which doth run
In the next brook, by whom that fiend should be
fordone.'⁶

"Well hop'd he then, when this was prophesied,
That from his sides some noble child should rise,
The which through fame should far be magnified,
And this proud giant should with brave emprise
Quite overthrow, who now gins to despise
The good Sir Bruin, growing far in years,
Who thinks from me his sorrow all doth rise.
Lo! this my cause of grief to you appears;
For which I thus do mourn, and pour forth
ceaseless tears."

¹ At once.² Burst.³ His last breath.⁴ Toll.⁵ Regret, think sorrowfully upon.

Inly touched with pity for her unmerited grief, Calepine, after a little thought, began to "conceive a fit relief for all her pain." "If," he says—

"If that the cause of this your languishment
Be lack of children to supply your place,
Lo! how good fortune doth to you present
This little babe, of sweet and lovely face,
And spotless spirit, in which ye may enchase⁷
Whatever forms ye list thereto apply,
Being now soft and fit them to embrace;
Whether ye list him train in chivalry,
Or nurse up⁸ in lore of learn'd philosophy.

"And, certes, it hath oftentimes been seen
That of the like, whose lineage was unknown,
More brave and noble knights have rais'd been
(As their victorious deeds have often shown,
Being with fame through many nations blown),
Than those which have been dandled in the lap.
Therefore some thought that those brave imps
were sown

Here by the gods, and fed with heav'nly sap,
That made them grow so high t' all honourable
hap."

"Harkening to his senseful speech," the lady took the babe, and "having over it a little wept, she bore it thence, and ever as her own it kept." Calepine was not less glad to be rid of the youthful burden—which Matilda palmed off on the old knight as his own, and brought up so well in all goodly thews, that the babe "became a famous knight well known, and did right noble deeds; the which elsewhere are shown." Calepine, meantime, left alone "under the greenwood's side in sorry plight," weaponless, steedless, and houseless, threw himself on the cold ground, and tossed all night in anguish, vowing that he would never lie in bed or at ease, "till that his lady's side he did attain," or learn that she was in safety.

CANTO V.

*The Salvage serves Serena well,
Till she Prince Arthur find:
Who her, together with his Squire,
With th' Hermit leaves behind.*

O WHAT an easy thing is to descry
The gentle blood, however it be wrapt
In sad misfortune's foul deformity,
And wretched sorrows, which have often hapt!
For howsoever it may grow misshapt,
Like this Wild Man being undisciplin'd,
That to all virtue it may seem unapt;
Yet will it show some sparks of gentle mind,
And at the last break forth in its own proper
kind.

That plainly may in this Wild Man be read,⁹
Who, though he were still in this desert wood,

⁶ Undone, ruined.⁷ Engrave, imprint.⁸ Train, educate.⁹ Perceived.

'Mongst salvage beasts, both rudely born and bred,
Nor ever saw fair guise, nor learn'd good,
Yet show'd some token of his gentle blood
By gentle usage of that wretched dame :
For certes he was born of noble blood,
However by hard hap he hither came ;
As ye may know, when time shall be to tell the same.

Waxing exceeding sorrowful and sad at the absence of Sir Calepine, the Wild Man went forth into the forest, and sought him far and near in vain. Then, returning to Serena, he expressed his sorrow "by speaking signs, as he could best them frame;" now wringing his hands, "now beating his hard head upon a stone." The lady understood his meaning, and threw herself on the ground in a passion of grief; regardless of her wounds, that still bled copiously. Seeing her so sorely distressed, the savage raised her up, and did his best to "stanch the bleeding of her dreary wound;" but she could not be comforted for the loss of her knight; and at last, abandoning hope of his return, she mounted his steed, and rode forth, "though feeble and forlorn." Her rude host, however, would not let her go alone; he awkwardly donned the arms which Calepine had left behind, and attended her on foot. "So forth they travell'd, an uneven pair;" the Salvage Man most carefully and faithfully serving the lady, "withouten thought of shame or villainy; nor ever show'd sign of foul disloyalty." One day, some of the furniture of her steed chanced to become disordered; and her groom, laying aside his cumbrous arms, applied himself to amend what was amiss. While he was busied thus, Prince Arthur and his squire Timias—who had met again by strange occasion—came riding thitherward. The poet suspends the story of Serena to tell us that, after Timias had regained the favour of Belphoebe (as related in canto viii., book iv.), he lived, "neither of envy nor of change afear'd," in her sovereign liking evermore; though many foes maligned him, "and with unjust detraction him did beard."

But, of them all which did his ruin seek,
Three mighty enemies did him most despite;
Three mighty ones, and cruel-minded eke,
That him not only sought by open might
To overthrow, but to supplant by sleight:
The first of them by name was call'd Despetto,¹
Exceeding all the rest in pow'r and height;
The second, not so strong, but wise, Decetto;²
The third, nor strong nor wise, but spitefulest,
Defetto.³

Ofttimes their sundry pow'rs they did employ,
And several deceits, but all in vain;
For neither they by force could him destroy,
Nor yet entrap in treason's subtile train:

¹ Malice, Despite; Italian, "dispetto."

² Deceit.

³ Defamation; Italian, "difetto," defect, flaw, or lack; thus Chaucer makes Troilus praise and "lack"

Therefore, conspiring all together plain,
They did their counsels now in one compound:
Where single forces fail, conjoin'd may gain.
The Blatant Beast the fittest means they found
To work his utter shame, and throughly him confound.

Upon a day, as they the time did wait
When he did range the wood for salvage game,
They sent that Blatant Beast to be a bait
To draw him from his dear beloved dame
Unwares into the danger of defame:⁴
For well they wist that squire to be so bold,
That no one beast in forest, wild or tame,
Met him in chase, but he it challenge wo'ld,
And pluck the prey oftentimes out of their greedy hold.

Timias, "seeing the ugly monster passing by," set upon him without fear, and forced him to fly—though not till the victor had been bitten by "his tooth impure." Leading his pursuer through thick woods and brakes and briars, to weary him and waste his breath, the Beast brought Timias at last to a woody glade, where his enemies awaited him. Assailed by all three at once, the wearied squire set his back to a tree, and warily warded off their heaped strokes.

Like a wild bull, that, being at a bay,
Is baited of a mastiff and a hound
And a cur-dog, that do him sharp assay
On ev'ry side, and beat about him round;
But most that cur, barking with bitter sound,
And creeping still behind, doth him encumber,
That in his chafe⁵ he digs the trampled ground,
And threats his horns, and bellows like the thunder:
So did that squire his foes disperse and drive asunder.

Him well behov'd so; for his three foes
Sought to encompass him on ev'ry side,
And dang'rously did round about enclose:
But, most of all, Defetto him annoy'd,
Creeping behind him still to have destroy'd;
So did Decetto eke him circumvent;
But stout Despetto in his greater pride
Did front him, face to face against him bent:
Yet he them all withstood, and often made relent.

At last, however, worn out with his former chase and his present exertions, the squire began to shrink and give way a little; when in the nick of time the neighing of a horse sounded through the forest, and a knight, entering upon the scene, at once flew to the squire's rescue. The three assailants of Timias did not wait for the near approach of the stranger; and, holding it useless to pursue them, Prince Arthur—for it was he—joyfully recognised and embraced Timias, "his lief, his life's desire." After many affectionate greetings and gracious speeches, the Prince and the squire mounted

such ladies as he chose in the temple where he first saw Oressida (page 233)—that is, praise and disparage or speak slightly of them.

⁴ Disgrace.

⁵ Angry passion.

their steeds, "and forth together rode, a comely couplement." Now, having arrived in sight of the Wild Man, busied about the sad Serena, "with those brave armours lying on the ground," they fancy that the "hilding hound"¹ has made a spoil of some worthy knight; Timias advances to take up the armour, but is sternly resisted by the savage.

Gnashing his grinded teeth with grisly look,
And sparkling fire out of his furious eyne,
Him with his fist unwares upon th' head he
strook,²

That made him down unto the earth incline;
Whence soon upstarting, much he gan repine,
And, laying hand upon his wrathful blade,
Thought therewithal forthwith him to have
alain;

Who it perceiving, hand upon him laid,
And, greedily him griping, his avengement
stay'd.

Serena now interposes, calling on the Prince to separate the combatants; Arthur complies; then, answering the inquiries of the Prince, Serena relates her misfortunes, and the gentle behaviour of the Wild Man, for whom she entreats gentleness and forbearance "since he cannot express his simple mind, nor yours conceive, nor but by tokens speak." Her fair words assuage all heat, so "that they to pity turn'd their former rage;" and, having made all things right about Serena's horse, they proceed together in search of some place where the wounds inflicted on Serena and Timias by the Blatant Beast may be healed—for both the sufferers are now in extreme pain and weakness, and the lady's hurts begin to breed corruption. By the way, Serena narrates to Arthur "the foul discourtesies and unknighly parts" lately showed her by Turpine; and the Prince vows that, so soon as he returns, he will avenge the abuses of that proud and shameful knight. Towards evening, they came to a plain "by which a little hermitage there lay, far from all neighbourhood, the which annoy it may."

And nigh thereto a little chapel stood,
Which being all with ivy overspread,
Deck'd all the roof, and, shadowing the rood,³
Seem'd like a grove fair branch'd over head:
Therein the hermit, which his life here led
In strait observance of religious vow,
Was wont his hours and holy things to bed;⁴
And therein he likewise was praying now,
When as these knights arriv'd, they wist not
where nor how.

They stay'd not there, but straightway in did
pass:

Whom when the hermit present saw in place,
From his devotion straight he troubled was;
Which breaking off he toward them did pace
With stay'd steps and grave beseeching grace:
For well it seem'd that whilom he had been

¹ Base, paltry dog.

² Cross.

³ Knew his proper deportment.

⁴ Becoming.

⁵ Struck.

⁶ To bid; to pray.

⁷ Daring deeds.

Some goodly person, and of gentle race,
That coud his good⁵ to all; and well did ween
How each to entertain with court'sy well be-
seen:⁶

And soothly it was said by common fame,
So long as age enabled him thereto,
That he had been a man of mickle name,
Renown'd much in arms and derring-do:⁷
But being ag'd now, and weary too
Of war's delight and world's contentious toil,
The name of knighthood he did disavow;
And, hanging up his arms and warlike spoil,
From all this world's encumbrance did himself
assoil.⁸

He thence them led into his hermitage,
Letting their steeds to graze upon the green;
Small was his house, and like a little cage,
For his own turn; yet inly neat and clean,
Deck'd with green boughs and flowers gay be-
seen;

Therein he them full fair did entertain,
Not with such forg'd shows, as fitter be'n
For courting fools that courtesies would feign,
But with entire affection and appearance plain.

Yet was their fare but homely, such as he
Did use his feeble body to sustain;
The which full gladly they did take in gree,
Such as it was, nor did of want complain;
But, being well suffic'd, them rested fain:⁹
But fair Serene all night could take no rest,
Nor yet that gentle squire, for grievous pain
Of their late wounds, the which the Blatant
Beast

Had given them, whose grief through suff'rance¹⁰
sore increast.

So all that night they pass'd in great disease,¹¹
Till that the morning, bringing early light
To guide men's labours, brought them also ease,
And some assuagement of their painful plight.
Then up they rose, and gan themselves to dight¹²
Unto their journey; but that squire and dame
So faint and feeble were, that they ne might
Endure to travel, nor one foot to frame:
Their hearts were sick; their sides were sore;
their feet were lame.

Therefore the Prince, urged to depart by
"great affairs in mind," left them in the good
hermit's care, and rode away, attended by the
Wild Man; who, "seeing his royal usage and
array, was greatly grown in love of that brave
peer."

CANTO VI.

*The Hermit heals both Squire and Dame
Of their sore maladies;
He¹³ Turpine doth defeat and shame
For his late villainies.*

No wound, which warlike hand of enemy
Inflicts with dint of sword, so sore doth light,

⁸ Absolve, free.

¹⁰ Endurance, neglect.

¹² Prepare.

¹³ Prince Arthur.

⁹ Gladly.

¹¹ Discomfort, pain.

As doth the poisonous sting which infamy
Infixeth in the name of noble wight:
For by no art, nor any leach's might,
It ever can recured be again;
Nor all the skill, which that immortal sprite
Of Podairius¹ did in it retain,
Can remedy such hurts; such hurts are hellish
pain.

Such were the wounds the which that Blatant
Beast

Made in the bodies of that squire and dame;
And, being such, were now much more increast
For want of taking heed unto the same,
That now corrupt and cureless² they became:
Howbe that careful hermit did his best,
With many kinds of medicines meet, to tame
The pois'nous humour which did most infest
Their rankling wounds, and ev'ry day them duly
drest.

For he right well in leach's craft was seen;³
And, through the long experience of his days,
Which had in many fortunes tossed been,
And pass'd through many perilous assays,
He knew the diverse went⁴ of mortal ways,
And in the minds of men had great insight;
Which with sage counsel, when they went astray,
He could inform, and them reduce aright;
And all the passions heal, which wound the
weaker sprite.

For whilom he had been a doughty knight,
As any one that liv'd in his days,
And prov'd oft in many a perilous fight,
In which he grace and glory won always,
And in all battles bore away the bays:
But, being now attack'd with timely age,
And weary of this world's unquiet ways,
He took himself unto this hermitage,
In which he liv'd alone, like careless bird in
cage.

One day, as he was searching of their wounds,
He found that they had fester'd privily;
And, rankling inward with unruly stounds,⁵
The inner parts now gan to putrefy,
That quite they seem'd past help of surgery;
And rather needed to be disciplin'd
With wholesome read⁶ of sad sobriety,
To rule the stubborn rage of passion blind:
Give salves to every sore, but counsel to the mind.

So, taking them apart into his cell,
He to that point fit speeches gan to frame,
As he the art of words knew wondrous well,
And eke could do as well as say the same:
And thus he to them said; "Fair Daughter
Dame,

And you, fair Son, which here thus long now lie
In piteous languor since ye hither came,
In vain of me ye hope for remedy,
And I likewise in vain do salves to you apply:

¹ The son of Æsculapius; who, with his brother
Machaon, inherited his father's skill in the healing art.

² Difficult of cure.

⁴ Course, tendency.

⁶ Counsel.

⁸ Secretly.

¹⁰ Strain, stock.

³ Skilled.

⁵ Pangs.

⁷ Passion.

⁹ Before.

¹¹ Front, foremost.

"For in yourself your only help doth lie
To heal yourselves, and must proceed alone
From your own will to cure your malady.
Who can him cure that will be cur'd of none?
If therefore health ye seek, observe this one:
First learn your outward senses to refrain
From things that stir up frail affection;⁷
Your eyes, your ears, your tongue, your talk re-
strain
From that they most affect, and in due terms
contain.

"For from those outward senses, ill affected,
The seed of all this evil first doth spring,
Which at the first, before it had infected,
Might easy be suppress'd with little thing:
But, being grown strong, it forth doth bring
Sorrow, and anguish, and impatient pain
In th' inner parts; and lastly, scattering
Contagious poison close⁸ through ev'ry vein,
It never rests till it have wrought his final bane.

"For that Beast's teeth, which wounded you
tofore,⁹

Are so exceeding venomous and keen,
Made all of rusty iron rankling sore,
That, where they bite, it booteth not to ween
With salve, or antidote, or other mean,
It ever to amend: nor marvel aught;
For that same beast was bred of hellish strene,¹⁰
And long in darksome Stygian den upbrought,
Begot of foul Echidna, as in books is taught.

"Echidna is a monster, direful dread,
Whom gods do hate, and heav'n's abhor to see;
So hideous is her shape, so huge her head,
That ev'n the hellish fiends affrighted be
At sight thereof, and from her presence flee:
Yet did her face and former¹¹ parts profess¹²
A fair young maiden, full of comely glee;
But all her hinder parts did plain express
A monstrous dragon, full of fearful ugliness.

"To her the gods, for her so dreadful face,
In fearful darkness, farthest from the sky
And from the earth, appointed have her place
'Mongst rocks and caves, where she enroll'd doth
lie

In hideous horror and obscurity,
Wasting the strength of her immortal age:
There did Typhaon¹³ with her company;
Cruel Typhaon, whose tempestuous rage
Makes th' heavens tremble oft, and him with
vows assuage.

"Of that commixtion they did then beget
This hellish dog, that hight the Blatant Beast;
A wicked monster, that his tongue doth whet
'Gainst all, both good and bad, both most¹⁴ and
least,

And pours his poisonous gall forth to infest
The noblest wights with notable defame:
Nor ever knight that bore so lofty crest,

¹² Present the appearance of; declare.

¹³ Typhoeus, a huge giant, son of Titan and Terra, who fought against the gods, but was struck down by Jove's thunderbolt, and buried under Mount Etna. Sometimes—as in the text—his name is confounded with that of Typhon, a giant produced from the earth by a blow of Juno's hand.

¹⁴ Greatest.

Or learn'd the art to please, I do not find :
This well I wot, that she so well applied
Her pleasing tongue, that soon she pacified
The wrathful Prince, and wrought her husband's
peace :

Who nath'less, not therewith satisfied,
His rancorous despite did not release,
Nor secretly from thought of fell revenge sur-
cease.

All night, while the Prince rested unsus-
pectingly, Turpine watched with weapons ready
to kill him ; but for very cowardice he let the
night pass without acting ; and early in the
morning the Prince " pass'd forth to follow his
first enterprise."

CANTO VII.

*Turpine is baffled : his two knights
Do gain their treason's meed.
Fair Mirabella's punishment
For Love's disdain decreed.*

THE first half of this canto is devoted to a
recital of Turpine's devices to wreak, by proxy,
vengeance on Prince Arthur ; and of his failure
and punishment. Following the Prince at safe
distance, Turpine met two young knights, whom
he incited to attack his chastiser, by stories of
great discourtesy suffered at his hands, and offers
of rich reward. The credulous knights pursued
and attacked Arthur, who speedily killed one
outright, and compelled the other to offer to
reveal the treason if his life were saved. The
victor held his hand, listened to the tale of
Turpine's treachery, and made the knight swear
to bring back the wretch that had hired him
to do the wicked deed. Returning to Turpine,
the baffled youth assured him that his enemy
was dead, and led him to the place where the
Prince lay alone and slumbering. Turpine
vainly sought to tempt his companion to slay
Arthur in his sleep ; and the opportune arrival
of the Wild Man, who had gone to gather fruit,
awakened the Prince and saved him from farther
peril. Turpine speedily found his adversary's
foot set on his neck, in token of thralldom ; and
Arthur finally hanged him by the heels upon a
tree, for greater infamy, and left him to the
scorn of all that passed that way. Then the
poet returns to the story of that lady "whom
late we left riding upon an ass, led by a carl
and fool¹ which by her side did pass."

She was a lady of great dignity,²
And lifted up to honourable place,
Famous through all the Land of Faëry :
Though of mean parentage and kindred base,
Yet deck'd with wondrous gifts of Nature's
grace,

¹ Only the fool, and not the carl, is mentioned at
the lady's first introduction to us in the preceding
canto.

² This lady, Mirabella, is supposed to represent that
"Rosalind"—"the widow's daughter of the glen," as
Spenser had called her in "The Shepherd's Calendar"

That all men did her person much admire,
And praise the feature of her goodly face ;
The beams whereof did kindle lovely fire³
In th' hearts of many a knight, and many a
gentle squire :

But she thereof grew proud and insolent,
That none she worthy thought to be her fere,⁴
But scorn'd them all that love unto her meant ;
Yet was she lov'd of many a worthy peer :
Unworthy she to be belov'd so dear,
That could not weigh⁵ of worthiness aright :
For beauty is more glorious bright and clear,
The more it is admir'd of many a wight,
And noblest she that serv'd is of noblest knight.

But this coy damsel thought, contrariwise,
That such proud looks would make her praised
more ;

And that, the more she did all love despise,
The more would wretched lovers her adore.
What car'd she who sigh'd for her sore,
Or who did wail or watch the weary night ?
Let them that list their luckless lot deplore ;
She was born free, not bound to any wight,
And so would ever live, and love her own de-
light.

Through such her stubborn stiffness and hard
heart,

Many a wretch for want of remedy
Did languish long in life-consuming smart,
And at the last through dreary dolour die :
Whilst she, the lady of her liberty,
Did boast her beauty had such sov'reign might,
That with the only twinkle of her eye
She could or save or spill⁶ whom she would
hight :⁷

What could the gods do more, but do it more
aright ?

But lo ! the gods, that mortal follies view,
Did worthily revenge this maiden's pride ;
And, naught regarding her so goodly hue,
Did laugh at her that many did deride,
Whilst she did weep, of no man mercifed :⁸
For on a day, when Cupid kept his court,
As he is wont at each Saint Valentide,
Unto the which all lovers do resort,
That of their love's success they there may make
report ;

It fortun'd then, that, when the rolls were read
In which the names of all Love's folk were
fil'd,⁹

That many there were missing ; which were
dead,

Or kept in bands, or from their loves exil'd,
Or by some other violence despoil'd.
Which when as Cupid heard, he wax'd wroth ;
And, doubting to be¹⁰ wrong'd or beguill'd,
He bade his eyes to be unblindfold both,
That he might see his men, and muster them
by oath.

—whom the poet loved and courted, and whose rejection
of his suit rankled long in his mind.

³ The fire of love.

⁴ Companion, consort.

⁵ Estimate.

⁶ Destroy.

⁷ Name, choose.

⁸ Pitied.

⁹ Registered.

¹⁰ Suspecting that he was.

The more he laughs, and does her closely quip,¹
To see her sore lament and bite her tender
lip.

Whose cruel handling when that squire beheld,
And saw those villains her so vilely use,
His gentle heart with indignation swell'd,
And could no longer bear so great abuse
As such a lady so to beat and bruise ;
But, to him stepping, such a stroke him lent,
That forc'd him th' halter from his hand to
loose,
And, maugré² all his might, back to relent :³
Else had he surely there been slain, or foully
shent.⁴

The villain, wroth for greeting him so sore,
Gather'd himself together soon again,
And with his iron baton, which he bore,
Let drive at him so dreadfully amain,
That for his safety he did him constrain
To give him ground, and shift to ev'ry side,
Rather than once his burden⁵ to sustain :
For bootless thing him seem'd to abide
So mighty blows, or prove the puissance of his
pride.

Like as a mastiff having at a bay
A savage bull, whose cruel horns do threat
Desperate danger, if he them assay,
Traceth⁶ his ground, and round about doth
beat,

To spy where he may some advantage get,
The while the beast doth rage and loudly roar ;
So did the squire, the while the carle did fret
And fume in his disdainful mind the more,
And oftentimes by Termagant⁷ and Mahound⁸
swore.

Nathless so sharply still he him pursued,
That at advantage him at last he took,
When his foot alipp'd (that slip he dearly rued),
And with his iron club to ground him strook ;⁹
Where still he lay, nor out of swoon awook,¹⁰
Till heavy hand the carl upon him laid,
And bound him fast : then when he up did look
And saw himself captiv'd, he was dismay'd,
Nor pow'r had to withstand, nor hope of any
aid.

Then up he made him rise, and forward fare,
Led in a rope which both his hands did bind ;
Nor aught that fool for pity did him spare,
But with his whip him following behind
Him often scourg'd, and forc'd his feet to find :
And otherwhiles with bitter mocks and mows¹¹
He would him scorn, that to his gentle mind
Was much more grievous than the other's blows :
Words sharply wound, but greatest grief of
scorning grows.

Serena, seeing Timias fall under the club of
Disdain, thought him slain, and fled away with
all the speed she might—to encounter many
perils, before she rejoined Sir Calepine.

¹ Jeer.² Retire.³ The weight of his club.⁴ Traverseth.⁵ In spite of.⁶ Maltreated, disgraced.

CANTO VIII.

*Prince Arthur overcomes Disdain :
Quits Mirabell from Dread :
Serena, found of savages,
By Calepine is freed.*

YE gentle Ladies, in whose sov'reign power
Love hath the glory of his kingdom left,
And th' hearts of men, as your eternal dow'r,
In iron chains, of liberty bereft,
Deliver'd hath unto your hands by gift ;
Be well aware how ye the same do use,
That pride do not to tyranny you lift ;
Lest, if men you of cruelty accuse,
He from you take that chiefdom which ye do
abuse.

And as ye soft and tender are by kind,¹²
Adorn'd with goodly gifts of beauty's grace,
So be ye soft and tender eke in mind ;
But cruelty and hardness from you chase,
That all your other praises will deface,
And from you turn the love of men to hate :
Ensample take of Mirabella's case,
Who from the high degree of happy state
Fell into wretched woes, which she repented
late.

Mirabella, "touch'd with compassion entire,"
much lamented the calamity into which the
gentle squire had fallen for her sake ; but her
entreaties on his behalf only made the captors
the more cruel. Passing on their way, they
met Prince Arthur, with Sir Enias (for such was
the name of the knight who had exposed to
him the treachery of Turpine), and augmented
their cruelty, as if to grieve the new comers.
Timias, seeing his lord the witness of his dis-
grace—"ashamed that with a hempen cord
he like a dog was led in captive case," hung
down his head. Sir Enias besought leave of the
Prince to deliver the two captives ; then, re-
ceiving his companion's assent, he dismounted,
and challenged the captors to free their victims
from their loathly hands. Disdain replied only
by a swift and terrible blow of his club, which
would have been fatal, if Enias had not lightly
slipped aside ; and he requited the carl by a
cruel stroke with his sword. But, as the
knight's arm was raised for a second blow,
Disdain met the sword in mid-air with his club,
shivered it to pieces, hurled Enias to the ground,
and set his foot on his neck with fell disdain.
Scorn now came running in, and held the knight
down, while Disdain proceeded to bind and
thrall him.

As when a sturdy ploughman with his hind
By strength have overthrown a stubborn steer,
They down him hold, and fast with cords do
bind,
Till they him force the buxom yoke to bear :
So did these two this knight oft tug and tear.

⁷ A Saracenic deity. See note 26, page 147.⁸ Mahomet.⁹ Struck.¹⁰ Awoke.¹¹ Nature.¹² Insulting grimaces.

Which when the Prince beheld, there standing
by,

He left his lofty steed to aid him near;
And, buckling soon himself, gan fiercely fly
Upon that carl, to save his friend from jeopardy.

Leaving Timias to the tender mercies of his
mate, Disdain vehemently attacked the Prince,
who yielded for a while to the blows of his club;
at last, when the caitiff had put forth all his
strength in what he meant to be a mortal blow,
Arthur anticipated him, "under his club with
wary boldness went, and smote him on the
knee, that never yet was bent."

It never yet was bent, nor bent it now,
All be the stroke so strong and puissant were,
That seem'd a marble pillar it could bow;
But all that leg, which did his body bear,
It crack'd throughout (yet did no blood appear),
So as it was unable to support
So huge a burden on such broken gear,
But fell to ground like to a lump of dirt;
Whence he essay'd to rise, but could not for his
hurt.

The Prince nimbly stepped to him, meaning
to strike the head from his shoulders; but the
lady interposed to save his life—since by his
death her life would have lamentable end.
Staying his hand, Arthur inquired the meaning
of those strange words from the lips of one
whom, in default of men, the very heavens
would rescue and redress.

Then bursting forth in tears, which gush'd fast
Like many water-streams, a while she stay'd,
Till, the sharp passion being overpast,
Her tongue to her restor'd, then thus she said;
"Nor heav'n's, nor men, can me, most wretched
maid,

Deliver from the doom of my desert,¹
The which the god of Love hath on me laid,
And damn'd to endure this direful smart,
For penance of my proud and hard rebellious
heart.

"In prime of youthly years, when first the flow'r
Of beauty gan to bud, and bloom delight,
And Nature me endued with plenteous dow'r
Of all her gifts, that pleas'd each living sight;
I was belov'd of many a gentle knight,
And sued and sought with all the service due:
Full many a one for me deep groan'd and sight,²
And to the door of death for sorrow drew,
Complaining out on me that would not on them
rue.³

"But let them love that list, or live or die,
Me list not die for any lover's dool:⁴
Nor list me leave my lov'd liberty
To pity him that list to play the fool:
To love myself I learn'd had in school.
Thus I triumph'd long in lovers' pain,
And, sitting careless on the scorner's stool,

¹ Desert, offence.

² Sighed.

⁴ Grief.

⁶ Base.

³ Have pity.

⁵ Adjudged.

⁷ Before.

Did laugh at those that did lament and plain:
But all is now repaid with interest again.

"For lo! the wing'd god, that woundeth hearts,
Caus'd me be call'd to account therefor;
And, for revengement of those wrongful smarts,
Which I to others did inflict before,
Addeem'd⁵ me to endure this penance sore;
That in this wise, and this unmeet array,
With these two lewd⁶ companions, and no
more,

Disdain and Scorn, I through the world should
stray,

Till I have sav'd so many as I erst⁷ did slay."

"Certes," said then the Prince, "the god is
just,

That taketh vengeance of his people's spoil:⁸

For were no law in love, but all that lust⁹

Might them oppress, and painfully turmoil,

His kingdom would continue but a while.

But tell me, Lady, wherefore do you bear

This bottle thus before you with such toil,

And eke this wallet at your back arrear,¹⁰

That for these carls to carry much more comely
were?"

"Here in this bottle," said the sorry maid,

"I put the tears of my contrition,

Till to the brim I have it full defray'd:¹¹

And in this bag, which I behind me don,

I put repentance for things past and gone.

Yet is the bottle leak,¹² and bag so torn,

That all which I put in falls out anon,

And is behind me trodden down of Scorn,

Who mocketh all my pain, and laughs the more
I mourn."

Much wondering at Cupid's wise judgments,
that could so subject proud hearts, the Prince
suffered Disdain to arise; which he did with
difficulty, by the aid of Scorn.

But, being up, he look'd again aloft,

As if he never had receiv'd fall;

And with stern eye-brows star'd at him¹³ oft,

As if he would have daunted him withal:

And standing on his tiptoes, to seem tall,

Down on his golden feet he often gaz'd,

As if such pride the other could appal;

Who was so far from being aught amaz'd,

That he his looks despis'd, and his boast dis-
prais'd.¹⁴

Turning back to unbind the captive squire,
who all the while sought to shun observation,
the Prince was amazed and delighted to discover
his own true groom, Timias; but the embraces
of the pair were interrupted by the cry of Mira-
bella, entreating the Prince to stay the Wild
Man's vehement assault upon Scorn, whom he
was scourging to death with his own whip. The
Prince put an end to the savage's assault, and
offered Mirabella her choice between being set
free from her attendants, and being left as she
was; but she said she must by all means fulfil

⁸ For the destruction of his servants.

⁹ Pleased.

¹¹ Filled, completed.

¹³ Prince Arthur.

¹⁰ Behind.

¹² Leaky.

¹⁴ Disparaged.

Love's penance, and prosecuted her journey
with her former companions ; while the Prince
went on his way with Enias and the Wild Man.
The poet now returns to Serena, whom he left
flying in fear, after Timias, her protector, had
been beaten down and bound by Disdain.
"Through hills and dales, through bushes and
through briars," she fled long, till she thought
herself beyond peril ; then, alighting and sitting
down on the plain, she blamed Sir Calepine as
the author of all her sorrow—although never
was turtle truer to his mate, than he to his lady
bright, for whose sake he endured great peril
and took restless pains. By and by she laid
herself to sleep on the grass ; and while she lay
securely in Morpheus' bosom, "false Fortune
did her safety betray unto a strange mischance,
that menac'd her decay."

In these wild deserts, where she now abode,
There dwelt a salvage nation, which did live
Of stealth and spoil, and making nightly road¹
Into their neighbours' borders ; nor did give
Themselves to any trade (as for to drive
The painful plough, or cattle for to breed,
Or by adventurous merchandise to thrive),
But on the labours of poor men to feed,
And serve their own necessities with others'
need.

"Thereto² they us'd one most accurd order ;³
To eat the flesh of men, whom they might find,
And strangers to devour which on their border
Were brought by error or by wreckful wind :
A monstrous cruelty 'gainst course of kind !⁴
They, towards ev'ning, wand'ring ev'ry way
To seek for booty, came by fortune blind
Where as this lady, like a sheep astray,
Now drown'd in the depth of sleep all fearless
lay.

Soon as they spied her, Lord ! what gladful glee
They made amongst themselves ! but when her
face

Like the fair ivory shining they did see,
Each gan his fellow solace and embrace,
For joy of such good hap by heav'nly grace.
Then gan they to devise what course to take ;
Whether to slay her there upon the place,
Or suffer her out of her sleep to wake,
And then her eat at once, or many meals to
make.

The best advisement⁵ was, of bad, to let her
Sleep out her fill without encumberment ;⁶
For sleep, they said, would make her battel⁷
better :

Then, when she wak'd, they all gave one consent
That, since by grace of God she there was sent,
Unto their god they would her sacrifice,
Whose share, her guiltless blood they would
present ;

But of her dainty flesh they did devise
To make a common feast, and feed with gour-
mandise.

¹ Inroad.² Custom.³ Counsel.⁴ Moreover.⁵ Nature.⁶ Annoyance, hindrance.

So round about her they themselves did place
Upon the grass, and diversely dispose,
As each thought best to spend the lingering
space :

Some with their eyes the daintiest morsels chose ;
Some praise her paps ; some praise her lips and
nose ;

Some whet their knives, and strip their elbows
bare ;

The priest himself a garland doth compose
Of finest flow'rs, and with full busy care
His bloody vessels wash and holy fire prepare.

The damsel wakes ; then all at once upstart,
And round about her flock, like many flies,
Whooping and halloing on ev'ry part,
As if they would have rent the brazen skies.
Which when she sees with ghastly grievous eyes,
Her heart does quake, and deadly pallid hue
Benumbs her cheeks : then out aloud she cries,
Where none is nigh to hear that will her rue,⁸
And rends her golden locks, and snowy breasts
embrue.⁹

But all boots not ; they hands upon her lay ;
And first they spoil her of her jewels dear,
And afterwards of all her rich array ;
The which amongst them they in pieces tear,
And of the prey each one a part doth bear.
Now being naked, to their sordid eyes
The goodly treasures of nature appear :
Which as they view with lustful fantasies,
Each wisheth to himself, and to the rest envie.

Her ivory neck ; her alabaster breast ;
Her paps, which like white silken pillows were
For Love in soft delight thereon to rest ;
Her tender sides ; her belly white and clear,
Which like an altar did itself uprear
To offer sacrifice divine thereon ;
Her goodly thighs, whose glory did appear
Like a triumphal arch, and thereupon
The spoils of princes hang'd which were in
battle won.

Those dainty parts, the darlings of delight,
Which might not be profan'd of common eyes,
Those villains view'd with loose lascivious sight,
And closely tempted with their crafty spies ;¹⁰
And some of them gan 'mongst themselves devise
Thereof by force to take their beastly pleasure :
But them the priest rebuking did advise
To dare not to pollute so sacred treasure
Vow'd to the gods : religion held even thieves
in measure.¹¹

So, being stay'd, they her from thence directed
Unto a little grove not far aside,
In which an altar shortly they erected
To slay her on. And now the Eventide
His broad black wings had through the heavens
wide

By this dispreed, that was the time ordain'd
For such a dismal deed, their guilt to hide :
Of few green turfs an altar soon they feign'd,¹²
And deck'd it all with flow'rs which they nigh
hand obtain'd.

⁷ Batten, grow fat and tender.⁸ Stains with blood.⁹ Restraint.¹⁰ Pity.¹¹ Glances, eyes.¹² Constructed.

Then, when as all things ready were aright,
The damsel was before the altar set,
Being already dead with fearful fright:
To whom the priest, with naked arms full net,¹
Approaching nigh, and, murderous knife well
whet,
Gan mutter close a certain secret charm,
With other devilish ceremonies met:²
Which done, he gan aloft t' advance his arm,
Whereat they shouted all, and made a loud
alarm.

Then gan the bagpipes and the horns to shrill
And shriek aloud, that, with the people's voice
Confused, did the air with terror fill,
And made the wood to tremble at the noise:
The while she wail'd, the more they did rejoice.
Now might ye understand that to this grove
Sir Calpine, by chance more than by choice,
The selfsame evening Fortune hither drove,
As he to seek Serena through the woods did rove.

Long had he sought her, and through many a
soil

Had travell'd still on foot in heavy arms,
Nor aught was tired with his endless toil,
Nor aught was feared of³ his certain harms:
And now, all weetless⁴ of the wretched storms
In which his love was lost, he slept full fast;
Till, being wak'd with these loud alarms,
He lightly started up like one aghast,
And, catching up his arms, straight to the noise
forth past.

There, by th' uncertain gleams of starry night,
And by the twinkling of their sacred fire,
He might perceive a little dawning sight
Of all which there was doing in that quire:⁵
'Mongst whom a woman spoil'd of all attire
He spied lamenting her unlucky strife,⁶
And groaning sore from griev'd heart entire:
Eftsoons he saw one with a naked knife
Ready to lance her breast, and let out lov'd life.

With that he thrusts into the thickest throng;
And, ev'n as his right hand adown descends,
He him preventing lays on earth along,
And sacrificeth to th' infernal fiends:
Then to the rest his wrathful hand he bends;
Of whom he makes such havoc and such hew,⁷
That swarms of damn'd souls to hell he sends:
The rest, that scape his sword and death eschew,⁸
Fly like a flock of doves before a falcon's view.

From them returning to that lady back,
Whom by the altar he doth sitting find,
Yet fearing death, and next to death the lack
Of clothes to cover what she ought by kind;⁹
He first her hands beginneth to unbind,
And then to question of her present woe,
And afterwards to cheer with speeches kind;
But she, for naught that he could say or do,
One word durst speak, or answer him a whit
thereto.

1 Clean.

3 Frightened, deterred, by.

4 Ignorant.

6 Calamity.

8 Avoid.

10 Occasion.

2 Joined.

5 Crowd.

7 Hewing.

9 Nature.

11 Dwells as a guest.

So inward shame of her uncomely case
She did conceive, through care of womanhood,
That, though the night did cover her disgrace,
Yet she in so unwomanly a mood
Would not bewray the state in which she stood:
So all that night to him unknown she past:
But day, that doth discover bad and good,
Ensuing, made her known to him at last:
The end whereof I'll keep until another cast.¹⁰

CANTO IX.

*Calidore hosts¹¹ with Melibes,
And loves fair Pastorell:
Corydon envies him, yet he
For ill rewards him well.*

Now turn again my team, thou jolly swain,¹²
Back to the furrow which I lately left;
I lately left a furrow one or twain
Unplough'd, the which my coulter had not cleft;
Yet seem'd the soil both fair and fruitful eft,¹³
As I it pass'd; that were too great a shame,
That so rich fruit should be from us bereft;
Besides the great dishonour and defame
Which should befall to Calidore's immortal
name.

So sharply he the monster did pursue,¹⁴
That day nor night he suffer'd him to rest,
Nor rested he himself (but nature's due)
For dread of danger not to be redrest,¹⁵
If he for sloth forlack'd¹⁶ so famous quest.
Him first from court he to the cities cours'd,
And from the cities to the towns him press'd,
And from the towns into the country forc'd,
And from the country back to private farms he
scors'd.¹⁷

From thence into the open fields he fled,
Where as the herds were keeping of their neat,¹⁸
And shepherds singing, to their flocks that fed,
Lays of sweet love and youth's delightful heat:
Him thither eke, for all his fearful threat,
He follow'd fast, and chas'd him so nigh,
That to the folds, where sheep at night do seat,
And to the little cots, where shepherds lie
In winter's wrathful time, he forc'd him to fly.

One day, as he pursued the chase, he spied a
company of shepherds piping and carolling,
while their beasts fed beside them in the budded
brooms, and nipped the tender blooms. Cali-
dore asked them if they had seen such a beast
as he pursued; but they answered in the nega-
tive, and offered him refreshments, which he
courteously accepted. Sitting among them, he
saw a fair damsel, wearing a crown of flowers,
and "clad in home-made green that her own
hands had dyed."

12 Cupid—whom the poet had invoked as his guide in the opening of the first book.

13 Also.

14 The Blatant Beast, which, in canto iii. of the present book, Calidore is left chasing.

15 Repaired.

16 Slackened, delayed.

17 Made to change his course.

18 Cattle.

Upon a little hillock she was plac'd,
Higher than all the rest, and round about
Environ'd with a garland, goodly grac'd,
Of lovely lasses ; and them all without
The lusty shepherd swains sat in a rout,¹
The which did pipe and sing her praises due,
And oft rejoyce, and oft for wonder about,
As if some miracle of heav'nly hue²
Were down to them descended in that earthly
view.

And soothly sure she was full fair of face,
And perfectly well shap'd in ev'ry limb,
Which she did more augment with modest grace
And comely carriage of her count'nance trim,
That all the rest like lesser lamps did dim :
Who, her admiring as some heav'nly wight,
Did for their sov'reign goddess her esteem,
And, carolling her name both day and night,
The fairest Pastorella her by name did hight.³

Nor was there herd, nor was there shepherd's
swain,
But her did honour ; and eke many a one
Burn'd in her love, and with sweet pleasing pain
Full many a night for her did sigh and groan :
But most of all the shepherd Corydon
For her did languish, and his dear life spend ;
Yet neither she for him nor other none
Did care a whit, nor any liking lend :
Though mean her lot, yet higher did her mind
ascend.

Her while Sir Calidore there view'd well,
And mark'd her rare demeanour, which him
seem'd

So far the mien of shepherds to excel,
As that he in his mind her worthy deem'd
To be a prince's paragon⁴ esteem'd,
He was unware surpris'd in subtle bands
Of the Blind Boy ;⁵ nor thence could he re-
deem'd

By any skill out of his cruel hands ;
Caught like the bird which gazing still on others
stands.

So stood he still long gazing thereupon,
Nor any will had thence to move away,
Although his quest⁶ were far afore him gone :
But, after he had fed, yet did he stay
And sate there still, until the flying day
Was farforth spent, discoursing diversely
Of sundry things, as fell, to work delay :
And evermore his speech he did apply
To th' herds, but meant them to the damsel's
fantasy.

By this the moisty Night, approaching fast,
Her dewy humour gan on th' earth to shed,
That warn'd the shepherds to their homes to
hast⁷

Their tender flocks, now being fully fed,
For fear of wetting them before their bed :⁸

¹ Company.

² Aspect, form.

³ Pastorella represents Frances, the daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham, and wife of Sir Philip Sidney—whose portrait, as already noticed, is painted in Sir Calidore. In "The Ruins of Time," a poem published some years previously, Spenser had already spoken of Sir Francis Walsingham as "old Melibee ;" and under

Then came to them a good old aged sire,
Whose silver locks bedeck'd his beard and head,
With shepherd's hook in hand, and fit attire,
That will'd the damsel rise ; the day did now
expire.

He was, to wit, by common voice esteem'd
The father of the fairest Pastorell,
And of herself in very deed so deem'd ;
Yet was not so ; but, as old stories tell,
Found her by fortune, which to him befell,
In th' open fields an infant left alone ;
And, taking up, brought home and nurs'd well
As his own child ; for other he had none ;
That she in tract⁹ of time accounted was his
own.

She at his bidding meekly did arise,
And straight unto her little flock did fare :
Then all the rest about her rose likewise,
And each his sundry sheep with several care
Gather'd together, and them homeward bare :
Whilst ev'ry one with helping hands did strive
Amongst themselves, and did their labours
share,
To help fair Pastorella home to drive
Her fleecy flock ; but Corydon most help did
give.

But Melibee (so hight that good old man),
Now seeing Calidore left all alone,
And night arriv'd hard at hand, began
Him to invite unto his simple home ;
Which, though it were a cottage clad with
loam,¹⁰

And all things therein mean, yet better so
To lodge than in the salvage fields to roam.
The Knight full gladly soon agreed thereto,
Being his heart's own wish ; and home with
him did go.

There he was welcom'd of that honest sire,
And of his aged baldame, homely well ;
Who him besought himself to disattire,
And rest himself till supper time befell ;
By which home came the fairest Pastorell,
After her flock she in their fold had tied ;
And, supper ready dight,¹¹ they to it fell
With small ado, and nature satisfied,
The which doth little crave contented to abide.

Then, when they had their hunger slak'd well,
And the fair maid the table ta'en away,
The gentle Knight, as he that did excel
In courtesy, and well could do and say,
For so great kindness as he found that day
Gan greatly thank his host and his good wife ;
And, drawing thence his speech another way,
Gan highly to commend the happy life
Which shepherds lead, without debate or bitter
strife.

"How much," said he, "more happy is the state
In which ye, father, here do dwell at ease,

the same designation he is introduced a little farther on in the present canto.

⁴ Companion, equal.

⁵ Love.

⁶ The object of his pursuit.

⁷ Hasten.

⁸ Before they were housed for the night.

⁹ Course.

¹⁰ Clay.

¹¹ Prepared.

In seas of troubles and of toilsome pain ;
That, whether quite from them for to retrace¹
I shall resolve, or back to turn again,
I may here with yourself some small repose ob-
tain."

He will be content with their simple fare and lowly cabin, and he offers much gold for recompense; but the good man, "naught tempted with the offer of his rich mould," thrusts it away lest it should "impair his peace with danger's dread," and makes the Knight welcome to share their humble life. So there he long remained, "daily beholding the fair Pastorell, and feeding on the bait of his own bane;" entertaining the maiden "with all kind courtesies he could invent," and every day accompanying her to the field. But she, unused to the ways of court, "had ever learn'd to love the lowly things;" and she "car'd more for Colin's carollings," than for all Calidore could do; "his lays, his loves, his looks, she did them all despise."

Which Calidore perceiving, thought it best To change the manner of his lofty look,
And, doffing his bright arms, himself address'd
In shepherd's weed; and in his hand he took,
Instead of steel-head spear, a shepherd's hook;
That who had seen him then, would have be-
thought

On Phrygian Paris by Plexippus' brook,
When he the love of fair *Enone*² sought,
What time the Golden Apple was unto him
brought.

So being clad, unto the fields he went
With the fair Pastorella ev'ry day,
And kept her sheep with diligent attent,
Watching to drive the ravenous wolf away,
The whilst at pleasure she might sport and
play;

And ev'ry evening helping them to fold:
And otherwhiles, for need, he did essay
In his strong hand their rugged teats to hold,
And out of them to press the milk: love so
much co'ld.

Corydon, who had long loved Pastorella, was rendered intensely jealous by the stranger's proceedings; he scowled, and plained to his comrades of nesc; and whenever he saw Calidore, his demeanour gave self-consuming jealousy. He bearing malice or envy, did mote Corydon in the favon And oft, when Corydon un Or little sparrows stolen fr Or wanton squirrels in the Or other dainty thing for h He would commend his best:

Yet she no whit his presen
Nor him could find to fane

¹ Retire.

² *Enone*, the wife of Paris, a goddesses for the golden apple Helen. Tennyson has in bean

This new-come shepherd had his market marr'd.
Old love is little worth when new is more pre-
fer'd.

One day, when as the shepherd swains together
Were met to make their sports and merry glee,
As they are wont in fair sunshiny weather,
The while their flocks in shadows shrouded be,
They fell to dance: then did they all agree
That Colin Clout should pipe, as one most fit;
And Calidore should lead the ring, as he
That most in Pastorella's grace did sit:
Thereat frown'd Corydon, and his lip closely bit.

But Calidore, of courteous inclination,
Took Corydon and set him in his place,
That he should lead the dance, as was his
fashion;

For Corydon could dance and trimly trace;⁴
And when as Pastorella, him to grace,
Her flow'ry garland took from her own head,
And plac'd on his, he did it soon displace,
And did it put on Corydon's instead:
Then Corydon wax frolic, that erst⁵ seem'd

dead.
Another time, when as they did dispose
To practise games and masteries to try,
They for their judge did Pastorella choose;
A garland was the meed of victory:
There Corydon, forth stepping, openly
Did challenge Calidore to wrestling game;
For he, through long and perfect industry,
Therein well practis'd was, and in the same
Thought sure t'avenge his grudge, and work his
foe great shame.

But Calidore he greatly did mistake;
For he was strong and mightily stiff pight,⁶
That with one fall his neck he almost brake;
And, had he not upon him fallen light,
His dearest joint he sure had broken quite.
Then was the oaken crown by Pastorell
Given to Calidore as his due right;
But he, that did in courtesy exeat,
Gave it to Corydon, and said he won it well.

Bearing himself thus, the Knight won the
commendation of his rivals—"for courtesy
among the rudest breeds good will and favour;"

Such was the beauty of this goodly band,
Whose sundry parts were here too long to tell :
But she, that in the midst of them did stand,
Seem'd all the rest in beauty to excel,
Crown'd with a rosy garland that right well
Did her beseeem : and ever, as the crew
About her danc'd, sweet flow'rs that far did
smell

And fragrant odours they upon her threw ;
But, most of all, those three did her with gifts
endue.

Those were the Graces, daughters of delight,
Handmaids of Venus, which are wont to haunt
Upon this hill, and dance there day and night :
Those three to men all gifts of grace do grant ;
And all that Venus in herself doth vaunt
Is borrow'd of them : but that fair one,
That in the midst was plac'd paravant,¹
Was she to whom that shepherd pip'd alone ;
That made him pipe so merrily as never none.

She was, to wit, that jolly shepherd's lass,
Which pip'd there unto that merry rout ;
That jolly shepherd, which there pip'd, was
Poor Colin Clout (who knows not Colin Clout?)
He pip'd apace, whilst they him danc'd about.
Pipe, jolly shepherd, pipe thou now apace
Unto thy love that made thee low to lout ;²
Thy love is present there with thee in place ;
Thy love is there advanc'd to be another Grace !³

Much wonder'd Calidore at this strange sight,
Whose like before his eye had never seen ;
And standing long astonish'd in sprite,
And rapt with pleasance, wist not what to
ween ;⁴

Whether it were the train of Beauty's Queen,
Or Nymphs, or Faeries, or enchanted show
With which his eyes might have deluded been.
Therefore, resolving what it was to know,
Out of the wood he rose, and toward them did go.

But, soon as he appear'd to their view,
They vanish'd all away out of his sight,
And clean were gone, which way he never knew ;
All save the shepherd, who, for fell despite
Of that displeasure, broke his bagpipe quite,
And made great moan for that unhappy turn :
But Calidore, though no less sorry wight
For that mishap, yet seeing him to mourn,
Drew near, that he the truth of all by him
might learn :

And, first him greeting, thus unto him spake ;
" Hail, jolly shepherd, which thy joyous days
Here ledest in this goodly merry-make,
Frequented of these gentle Nymphs always,
Which to thee flock to hear thy lovely lays !
Tell me, what might these dainty damsels be
Which here with thee do make their pleasant
plays ?

¹ In front, conspicuously.

² Bend.

³ Colin Clout being the poet himself, his "love," in this passage, considering the dates, must be understood as representing the Irish lady whom he married.

⁴ Knew not what to think.

⁵ In her service.

⁶ Æacides—Peleus, the son of Æacus.

Right happy thou that may'st them freely see !
But why, when I them saw, fled they away
from me ?"

" Not I so happy," answer'd then that swain,
" As thou unhappy, which them thence did
chase,

Whom by no means thou canst recall again ;
For, being gone, none can them bring in place,
But whom they of themselves list so to grace."

" Right sorry I," said then Sir Calidore,
" That my ill fortune did them hence displace :
But since things pass'd none may now restore,
Tell me what were they all, whose lack thee
grieves so sore."

Then gan that shepherd thus for to dilate ;
" Then wot, thou shepherd, whatsoe'er thou be,
That all those ladies which thou sawest late
Are Venus' damsels, all within her fee,⁵
But differing in honour and degree :
They all are Graces which on her depend ;
Besides a thousand more which ready be
Her to adorn, whenso she forth doth wend ;
But those three in the midst do chief on her
attend.

" They are the daughters of sky-ruling Jove,
By him begot of fair Eurynomé,
The Ocean's daughter, in this pleasant grove,
As he, this way coming from feastful glee
Of Thetis' wedding with Æacidee,⁶
In summer's shade himself here rested weary :
The first of them hight mild Euphrosyné,
Next fair Aglaia, last Thalia merry ;
Sweet Goddesses all three, which me in mirth
do cherry !"⁷

" These three on men all gracious gifts bestow
Which deck the body or adorn the mind,
To make them lovely or well-favour'd show ;
As comely carriage, entertainment kind,
Sweet semblance,⁸ friendly offices that bind,
And all the complements of courtesy :
They teach us how to each degree and kind
We should ourselves demean, to low, to high,
To friends, to foes ; which skill men call Civility.

" Therefore they always smoothly seem to smile,
That we likewise should mild and gentle be ;
And also naked are, that without guile
Or false dissemblance all them plain may see,
Simple and true, from covert malice free ;
And eke themselves so in their dance they bore,
That two of them still froward⁹ seem'd to be,
But one still towards show'd herself afore ;
That good should from us go, than come, in
greater store."¹⁰

" Such were those Goddesses which ye did see ;
But that fourth Maid, which there amidst them
trac'd,¹¹

Who can aread¹² what creature might she be,
Whether a creature, or a goddess grac'd

⁷ Cherish ; French, "chérir."

⁸ Demeanour.

⁹ At a distance—or, directed away from (the spectator).

¹⁰ To show that good should go out from us in more liberal measure than it comes to us.

¹¹ Moved.

¹² Declare.

lamentation, wasted her goodly beauty, which did fade "like to a flow'r that feels no heat of sun which may her feeble leaves with comfort glad."

CANTO XI.

*The thieves fall out for Pastorell,
Whilst Melibee is slain :
Her Calidore from them redeems,
And bringeth back again.*

THE joys of love, if they should ever last
Without affliction or disquietness
That worldly chances do amongst them cast,
Would be on earth too great a blessedness,
Liker to heav'n than mortal wretchedness :
Therefore the winged god, to let men weet¹
That here on earth is no sure happiness,
A thousand sours hath temper'd with one sweet,
To make it seem more dear and dainty, as it meet.

So did it now befall to Pastorella : Fortune, not content with making her a captive among thieves, in dreadful darkness, threw on her greater mischief ; for the captain of the band, one day viewing the prisoners, beheld with lustful eyes that lovely guest, "fair Pastorella, whose sad mournful hue like the fair morning clad in misty fog did shew." His barbarous heart was fired with love ; in his own mind, he allotted her to himself as his part of the prey ; and from that day he sought, by kindness and threats combined, to win her to his will. But all that he could do did not one whit affect her constancy and purity ; though at last, fearing lest he might take by force what she denied, she granted him some little show of favour, in the hope that either she might be set free, or her captivity eased : "a little well is lent that gaineth more withal." The captain, however, was only stimulated to more eager urging of his suit ; till the maiden found no means to bar him, but to feign a sudden sickness, during which he could approach her only when others were present. While Pastorella lay sick, a company of merchants arrived at the island in quest of slaves, and were met by some of the thieves. Conducting the new-comers to the captain, as he sat "by his fair patient's side with sorrowful regret," the men asked that the captives might be sold, and the price equally shared among the band. Though "much appalled" by the request, the captain could not but comply ; Melibee, Corydon, and the rest, were brought forth and shown to the merchants ; but before any bargain was concluded, some of the gang inquired for the fair shepherdess who had been taken along with the others, and began to extol her beauty, "the more t' augment her price through praise of comeliness."

¹ Know.

² Simple.

³ Value.

⁴ In comparison with her.

To whom the captain in full angry wise
Made answer, that the maid of whom they
spake

Was his own purchase and his only prize ;
With which none had to do, nor aught partake,
But he himself which did that conquest make ;
Little for him to have one silly² lass ;
Besides, through sickness now so wan and weak,
That nothing meet in merchandise to pass :
So shew'd them her, to prove how pale and
weak she was.

The sight of whom, though now decay'd and
marr'd,

And eke but hardly seen by candle-light,
Yet, like a diamond of rich regard,³
In doubtful shadow of the darksome night,
With starry beams about her shining bright,
These merchants' fixed eyes did so amaze,
That what through wonder, and what through
delight,
A while on her they greedily did gaze,
And did her greatly like, and did her greatly
praise.

At last when all the rest them offer'd were,
And prices to them plac'd at their pleasure,
They all refus'd in regard of her ;⁴
Nor aught would buy, however pric'd with
measure,⁵

Withouten her, whose worth above all treasure
They did esteem, and offer'd store of gold :
But then the captain, fraught with more dis-
pleasure,
Bade them be still ; his love should not be sold ;
The rest take if they would ; he her to him
would hold.

Some of the chief robbers bade him forbear
such insolent language—for, let it grieve him
ever so much, the maid should be sold with the
rest, to enhance their price. The captain drew
his sword and dared any to lay hand on her ;
soon they fell to blows ; "and the mad steel
about doth fiercely fly," making way for Death
to walk in a thousand dreadful shapes "in the
horror of the grialy night"—the candles having
been quenched.

Like as a sort⁶ of hungry dogs, y-met
About some carcase by the common way,
Do fall together, striving each to get
The greatest portion of the greedy prey ;
All on confus'd heaps themselves assay,
And snatch, and bite, and rend, and tug, and
tear ;
That who them sees would wonder at their
fray,
And who sees not would be afraid to hear :
Such was the conflict of those cruel Brigands
there.

But first of all the robbers slew the captives,
lest they should join against the weaker side,
or rise against the surviving remnant ; Corydon
alone escaping craftily in the darkness. All

⁵ However moderate the price set upon them.

⁶ Troop, crowd.

Like lifeſul heat to numb'd ſenſes brought,
And life to feel that long for death had ſought:
Nor leſs in heart rejoic'd Calidore
When he her found; but, like to one diſtraught
And robb'd of reaſon, toward her him bore;
A thouſand times embrac'd, and kiſs'd a thou-
ſand more.

But now by this, with noiſe of late uproar,
The hue and cry was rais'd all about;
And all the Brigands flocking in great ſtore
Unto the cave gan preſs, naught having doubt¹
Of that was done, and enter'd in a rout.
But Calidore in th' entry cloſe did ſtand,
And, entertaining them with courage ſtout,
Still ſlew the foremoſt that came firſt to hand;
So long, till all the entry was with bodies
mann'd.²

Then, when no more could nigh to him approach,
He breath'd his ſword, and reſted him till day;
Which when he ſpied upon the earth t' encroach,
Through the dead carcaſes he made his way,
'Mongſt which he found a ſword of better ſay,³
With which he forth went into th' open light,
Where all the reſt for him did ready ſtay,
And, fierce aſſailing him, with all their might
Gan all upon him lay: there gan a dreadful
fight.

How many flies in hotteſt ſummer's day
Do ſeize upon ſome beaſt whoſe fleſh is bare,⁴
That all the place with ſwarms do overlay,
And with their little ſtings right felly fare:⁵
So many thieves about him ſwarming are,
All which do him aſſail on ev'ry ſide,
And ſore oppreſs, nor any him doth ſpare;
But he doth with his raging brand divide
Their thickeſt troops, and round about him
ſcatt'reth wide.

Like as a lion, 'mongſt a herd of deer,
Diſperſeth them to catch his choiceſt prey;
So did he fly amongſt them here and there,
And all that near him came did hew and ſlay,
Till he had ſtow'd with bodies all the way;
That none his danger daring to abide
Fled from his wrath, and did themſelves convey
Into their caves, their heads from death to hide,
Nor any left that victory to him envied.⁶

Then, back returning to his deareſt dear,
He her gan to recomfort all he might
With gladful ſpeeches and with lovely cheer;
And, forth her bringing to the joyous light,
Whereof ſhe long had lack'd the wiſhful ſight,
Deviſ'd all goodly means from her to drive
The ſad remembrance of her wretched plight:
So her unneth⁷ at laſt he did revive,
That long had lain dead, and made again alive.

This done, into thoſe thievish dens he went,
And thence did all the ſpoils and treaſures take,
Which they from many long had robb'd and rent,
But Fortune now the victor's meed did make:

¹ Suſpicion.

² Blocked up; filled (as a ſhip with her crew).

³ Aſſay, temper.

⁴ Appears through a raw or wound.

⁵ Cruelly behave.

⁷ With difficulty.

⁶ Diſputed with him.

⁸ Beſtow upon.

Of which the beſt he did his love betake;⁸
And alſo all thoſe flocks, which they before
Had reft from Melibee and from his make,⁹
He did them all to Corydon reſtore:
So drove them all away, and his love with him
bore.

CANTO XII.

*Fair Paſtorella by great hap
Her parents underſtands,
Calidore doth the Blatant Beaſt
Subdue, and bind in bands.*

LIKE as a ſhip, that through the Ocean wide
Directs her courſe unto one certain coaſt,
Is met of many a counter wind and tide,
With which her wing'd ſpeed is let¹⁰ and croſt,
And ſhe herſelf in ſtormy ſurges toſt;
Yet, making many a board and many a bay,¹¹
Still winneth way, nor hath her compaſs loſt;
Right ſo it fares with me in this long way,
Whoſe courſe is often ſtay'd, yet never is
aſtray.

For nothing has been waſted or miſſaid of
all that has prevented Calidore from follow-
ing his firſt queſt, ſince it has ſhown "the
courteſy by him profeſt even unto the loweſt
and the leaſt." But now the poet comes back
into his courſe, to the "achievement of the
Blatant Beaſt," which all this time roamed
unreſtrained. Calidore, when he had reſcued
Paſtorella, brought her to the Caſtle of Belgard,
belonging to the good Sir Bellamour, who in
youth had been "a luſty knight as ever wielded
ſpear," and had fought many a battle for a lady
dear and fair. Claribell was her name; and
her father, the Lord of Many Iſlands, thought
to have wedded her to the Prince of Pictland.
But ſhe loved Bellamour, and ſecretly married
him; her father diſcovered the marriage, and
threw them both into dungeons deep but ſepa-
rate; yet, by bribing the keepers, Bellamour
gained access to the lady, and in time ſhe bore
a maiden child. The babe was given to Clari-
bella's handmaid, to be brought up under ſome
ſtrange attire.

The truſty damſel bearing it abroad
Into the empty fields, where living wight
Might not bewray¹² the ſecret of her load,
She forth gan lay unto the open light
The little babe, to take thereof a ſight:
Whom whiſt ſhe did with watery eyne behold,
Upon the little breſt, like crystal bright,
She might perceive a little purple mold,¹³
That like a roſe her ſilken leaves did fair un-
fold.

Much as ſhe pitied the babe, the handmaid
could not remedy its wretched caſe, but had to

⁹ Mate, wife.

¹⁰ Hindered.

¹¹ Many a tack, and many a bend or curve. "A
board" is defined in "Young's Nautical Dictionary"
as "the ſtretch which a veſſel makes on each tack in
beating to windward."

¹² Discover.

¹³ Mole.

Nor Kaisers spar'd he a whit, nor Kings ;
But either blotted them with infamy,
Or bit them with his baneful teeth of injury.

But Calidore, thereof no whit afraid,
Encounter'd him with so impetuous might,
That th' outrage of his violence he stay'd,
And beat aback, threat'ning in vain to bite,
And spitting forth the poison of his spite
That foam'd all about his bloody jaws :
Then rearing up his former¹ feet on height,²
He ramp'd³ upon him with his ravenous paws,
As if he would have rent him with his cruel
claws.

But he right well aware, his rage to ward,
Did cast his shield atween ; and, therewithal
Putting his puissance forth, pursued so hard,
That backward he enforc'd him to fall ;
And, being down, ere he new help could call,
His shield he on him threw, and fast down held ;
Like as a bullock, that in bloody stall
Of butcher's baleful hand to ground is feld,
Is forcibly kept down, till he be thoroughly
quell'd.

Full cruelly the Beast did rage and roar
To be down held, and master'd so with might,
That he gan fret and foam out bloody gore,
Striving in vain to rear himself upright :
For still, the more he strove, the more the
Knight

Did him suppress, and forcibly subdue ;
That made him almost mad for fell despite ;
He grinn'd, he bit, he scratch'd, he venom threw,
And far'd like a fiend right horrible in hue :

Or like the hell-born Hydra, which they feign
That great Alcides whilom overthrew,
After that he had labour'd long in vain
To crop his thousand heads, the which still new
Forth budded, and in greater number grew.
Such was the fury of this hellish Beast,
Whilst Calidore him under him down threw ;
Who nathemore his heavy load releast,
But ay, the more he rag'd, the more his pow'r
increast.

Then, when the Beast saw he might naught

For never more defaming gentle knight
Or unto lovely lady doing wrong :
And thereunto a great long chain he tight,⁴
With which he drew him forth, ev'n in his own
despite.

Like as whilom that strong Tirynthian swain⁵
Brought forth with him the dreadful dog of
hell,
Against his will fast bound in iron chain,
And, roaring horribly, did him compel
To see the hateful sun, that he might tell
To grisly Pluto what on earth was done,
And to the other damn'd ghosts which dwell
For ay in darkness which day-light doth shun :
So led this Knight his captive with like conquest
won.

Yet greatly did the Beast repine at those
Strange bands, whose like till then he never
bore,
Nor ever any durst till then impose ;
And chaf'd inly, seeing now no more
Him liberty was left aloud to roar :
Yet durst he not draw back, nor once withstand
The prov'd pow'r of noble Calidore ;
But trembled underneath his mighty hand,
And like a fearful dog him follow'd through the

Him through all Faery Land he follow'd so
As if he learn'd had obedience long,
That all the people, whereso he did go,
Out of their towns did round about him throng,
To see him lead that Beast in bondage strong ;
And, seeing it, much wonder'd at the sight :
And all such persons as he erst⁷ did wrong
Rejoic'd much to see his captive plight,
And much admir'd⁸ the Beast, but more admir'd
the Knight.

Thus was this monster by the mast'ring might
Of doughty Calidore suppress'd and tam'd,
That never more he might endamage wight
With his vile tongue, which many had defam'd,
And many causeless caus'd to be blam'd :
So did he ake long after this remain,
Until that (whether wicked fate so fram'd,

Nor any is that may him now restrain,
 He growen is so great and strong of late,
 Barking and biting all that him do bait,¹
 All be they² worthy blame, or clear of crime;
 Nor spareth he most learned wits to rate,
 Nor spareth he the gentle poet's rhyme;
 But rends without regard of person or of time.

Nor may this homely verse, of many meanest,
 Hope to escape his venomous despite,

More than my former writs, all³ were they
 cleanest
 From blameful blot, and free from all that wite⁴
 With which some wicked tongues did it backbite,
 And bring into a mighty Peer's⁵ displeasure,
 That never so deserv'd to endite.⁶
 Therefore do you, my rhymes, keep better
 measure,
 And seek to please; that now is counted wise
 men's treasure.

TWO CANTOS OF MUTABILITY:

WHICH, BOTH FOR FORM AND MATTER, APPEAR TO BE PARCEL OF SOME
 FOLLOWING BOOK OF

THE FAERIE QUEEN,

UNDER

THE LEGEND OF CONSTANCY.⁷

CANTO VI.

*Proud Change (not pleas'd in mortal things
 Beneath the moon to reign)
 Pretends as well of gods as men
 To be the Sovereign.*

WHAT man that sees the ever-whirling wheel
 Of Change, the which all mortal things doth sway,
 But that thereby doth find, and plainly feel,
 How Mutability in them doth play
 Her cruel sports to many men's decay?⁸
 Which that to all may better yet appear,
 I will rehearse, that whilom I heard say,
 How she at first herself began to rear
 'Gainst all the gods, and th' empire sought from
 them to bear.

But first here falleth fittest to unfold
 Her antique race and lineage ancient,
 As I have found it register'd of old
 In Faery Land 'mongst records permanent.
 She was, to wit, a daughter by descent
 Of those old Titans that did whilom strive
 With Saturn's son for heaven's regiment;⁹
 Whom though high Jove of kingdom did de-
 prive,
 Yet many of their stem long after did survive:

¹ Molest, attack.

² Whether they be.

³ Although.

⁴ Blameworthiness, censure.

⁵ The Lord Treasurer, Burleigh, who had severely handled the earlier books of "The Faerie Queen." See note 1, page 444.

⁶ That never had good cause to indict or censure it so.

⁷ The two cantos called "Of Mutability," and two stanzas of a third canto, were not published during Spenser's lifetime. They first appeared with the third edition of "The Faerie Queen," published in 1609, which

And many of them afterwards obtain'd
 Great pow'r of Jove, and high authority:
 As Hecaté, in whose almighty hand
 He plac'd all rule and principality,
 To be by her dispos'd diversely
 To gods and men, as she them list divide;
 And dread Bellona, that doth sound on high
 Wars and alarums unto nations wide,
 That makes both heav'n and earth to tremble at
 her pride.

So likewise did this Titaness aspire
 Rule and dominion to herself to gain;
 That as a goddess men might her admire,
 And heav'nly honours yield, as to them twain:¹⁰
 And first on earth she sought it to obtain;
 Where she such proof and sad examples shew'd
 Of her great pow'r, to many one's great pain,
 That not men only (whom she soon subdued),
 But eke all other creatures her bad doings rued.¹¹

For she the face of earthly things so chang'd,
 That all which Nature had establish'd first
 In good estate, and in meet order rang'd,
 She did pervert, and all their statutes burst:¹²
 And all the world's fair frame (which none yet
 durst

contains no preface or explanation; thus, although they are usually set down as belonging to the seventh book, there is no actual warrant for that assumption. The internal evidence leaves no doubt that they were the work of Spenser; and, the peculiar characteristics of the poet quite apart, they are more majestically and musically Spenserian than many cantos of the earlier books. They are here presented without curtailment.

⁸ Rule.

¹⁰ That is, as to Hecate and Bellona.

¹¹ Deplored.

¹² Broke.

Of gods or men to alter or misguide)
She alter'd quite ; and made them all accurst
That God had bless'd, and did at first provide
In that still happy state for ever to abide.

Nor she the laws of Nature only brake,
But eke of Justice and of Policy ;
And wrong of right, and bad of good, did make,
And death for life exchanged foolishly :
Since which all living wights have learn'd to die,
And all this world is waxen daily worse.
O piteous work of Mutability,
By which we all are subject to that curse,
And death, instead of life, have suck'd from our
nurse !

And now, when all the earth she thus had
brought

To her behest, and thrall'd to her might,
She gan to cast in her ambitious thought
T' attempt the empire of the heaven's height,
And Jove himself to shoulder from his right.
And first she pass'd the region of the air
And of the fire, whose substance thin and slight
Made no resistance, nor could her contrair,¹
But ready passage to her pleasure did prepare.

Thence to the circle of the Moon she clamb,²
Where Cynthia reigns in everlasting glory,
To whose bright shining palace straight she came,
All fairly deck'd with heaven's goodly story ;
Whose silver gates (by which there sat a hoary
Old aged sire, with hower-glass³ in hand,
Hight Time) she enter'd were he lief or sorry ;⁴
Nor stay'd till she the highest stage had scann'd,⁵
Where Cynthia did sit, that never still did stand.

Her sitting on an ivory throne she found,
Drawn of two steeds, th' one black, the other
white,

Environ'd with ten thousand stars around,
That duly her attended day and night ;
And by her side there ran her page, that hight
Vesper, whom we the evening-star intend ;⁶
That with his torch, still twinkling like twilight,
Her lighten'd all the way where she should wend,
And joy to weary wand'ring travellers did lend :

That when the hardy Titaness beheld
The goodly building of her palace bright,
Made of the heaven's substance, and upheld
With thousand crystal pillars of huge height,
She gan to burn in her ambitious sprite,
And t' envy her that in such glory reign'd.
Eftsoons she cast by force and tortious⁷ might
Her to displace, and to herself t' have gain'd
The kingdom of the Night, and waters by her
wan'd.⁸

Boldly she bid the goddess down descend
And let herself into that ivory throne ;
For she herself more worthy thereof wend,⁹

¹ Withstand.

³ Hour-glass.

⁵ Climbed, ascended ; Latin, "scando," I climb.

⁶ Name ; understand to be.

⁸ Diminished ; by the moon's influence in producing the tides.

⁹ Weened, believed.

¹⁰ She needed to lend. There is an allusion to Diana's

² Climbed.

⁴ Willing or unwilling.

⁷ Wrongful.

And better able it to guide alone ;
Whether to men, whose fall she did bemoan,
Or unto gods, whose state she did malign,
Or to th' infernal pow'rs her need give loan¹⁰
Of her fair light and bounty most benign,
Herself of all that rule she deem'd most condign.¹¹

But she, that had to her that sov'reign seat
By highest Jove assign'd, therein to bear
Night's burning lamp, regarded not her threat,
Nor yielded aught for favour or for fear ;
But with stern count'nance and disdainful
cheer,¹²

Bending her horn'd brows, did put her back ;
And, boldly blaming her for coming there,
Bade her at once from heaven's coast to pack,
Or at her peril bide the wrathful thunder's
wrack.

Yet nathemore the giantess forbore ;
But, boldly pressing on, raught¹³ forth her hand
To pluck her down perforce from off her chair ;
And, therewith lifting up her golden wand,
Threaten'd to strike her if she did withstand :
Whereat the Stars, which round about her
blaz'd,
And eke the Moon's bright waggon, still did
stand,
All being with so bold attempt amaz'd,
And on her uncouth habit and stern look still
gaz'd.

Meanwhile the Lower World, which nothing
knew

Of all that chanc'd here, was darken'd quite ;
And eke the heav'ns, and all the heav'nly crew
Of happy wights, now unpurvey'd of¹⁴ light,
Were much afraid, and wonder'd at that sight ;
Fearing lest Chaos broken had his chain,
And brought again on them eternal night ;
But chiefly Mercury, that next doth reign,
Ran forth in haste unto the King of Gods to
plain.¹⁵

All ran together with a great outcry
To Jove's fair palace fix'd in heaven's height ;
And, beating at his gates full earnestly,
Gan call to him aloud with all their might
To know what meant that sudden lack of light.
The Father of the Gods, when this he heard,
Was troubled much at their so strange affright,
Doubting lest Typhon were again uprear'd,¹⁶
Or other his old foes that once him sorely fear'd.

Eftsoons the son of Maia¹⁷ forth he sent
Down to the circle of the Moon, to know
The cause of this so strange astonishment,
And why she did her wonted course foralow ;¹⁸
And, if that any were on earth below
That did with charms or magic her molest,
Him to attach, and down to hell to throw ;

threefold sovereignty, in earth, in heaven, and in hell.
See note 23, page 39.

¹² Demeanour.

¹⁴ Unprovided with.

¹⁶ Typhoeus, whom Jupiter had buried under Mount Etna. See note 13, page 524.

¹⁷ Mercury ; or, as the Greeks called him, Hermes.

¹⁸ Neglect, slacken.

¹¹ Worthy.

¹³ Reached.

¹⁵ Complain.

The younger thrust the elder from his right :
 Since which thou, Jove, injuriously hast held
 The heaven's rule from Titan's sons by might ;
 And them to hellish dungeons down hast fell'd :
 Witness, ye heav'ns, the truth of all that I have
 tell'd." ¹

Whilst she thus spake, the gods, that gave good
 ear

To her bold words, and mark'd well her grace
 (Being of stature tall as any there
 Of all the gods, and beautiful of face
 As any of the goddesses in place),
 Stood all astonied ; like a sort ² of steers,
 'Mongst whom some beast of strange and foreign
 race

Unwares is chanc'd, far straying from his peers :
 So did their ghastly gaze bewray their hidden
 fears.

Till, having paus'd a while, Jove thus bespake ;
 " Will never mortal thoughts cease to aspire
 In this bold sort to heaven claim to make, .
 And touch celestial seats with earthly mire ?
 I would have thought that bold Procrustes' hire,
 Or Typhon's fall, or proud Ixion's pain,
 Or great Prometheus tasting of our ire, ³
 Would have suffic'd the rest for to restrain,
 And warn'd all men by their example to refrain :

" But now this off-scum of that cursed fry
 Dares to renew the like bold enterprise,
 And challenge th' heritage of this our sky ;
 Whom what should hinder, but that we likewise
 Should handle as the rest of her allies,
 And thunder-drive to hell ?" With that he shook
 His nectar-dew'd locks, with which the skies
 And all the world beneath for terror quook,
 And oft ⁴ his burning levin-brand ⁵ in hand he
 took.

But when he look'd on her lovely face,
 In which fair beams of beauty did appear
 That could the greatest wrath soon turn to grace
 (Such sway doth beauty ev'n in heaven bear),
 He stay'd his hand ; and, having chang'd his
 cheer, ⁶

He thus again in milder wise began ;
 " But ah ! if gods should strive with flesh y-fere, ⁷
 Then shortly should the progeny of man
 Be rooted out, if Jove should do still what he
 can !

" But thee, fair Titan's child, I rather ween
 Through some vain error, or inducement light,
 To see that mortal eyes have never seen ;
 Or through ensample of thy sister's might,
 Bellona, whose great glory thou dost spite, ⁸

¹ Told.

² Herd.

³ Typhon (rather, Typhoeus) and Prometheus, are correctly enough reckoned among those who aspired to the sovereignty of heaven ; and though Ixion was not a Titan, but only king of the Lapithæ—not a rival, but only a treacherous guest, of Zeus—his introduction in such company may be excused, in despite of mytho-chronological record. But Procrustes—the Attican robber-chief whose exacting bed is even yet famous, and of whom Theseus rid the country—belongs to a totally distinct category and period from those in which he is here mentioned.

⁴ Then, also.

⁵ Thunder-bolt.

Since thou hast seen her dreadful pow'r below,
 'Mongst wretched men (dismay'd with her af-
 fright),
 To bandy crowns, and kingdoms to bestow :
 And sure thy worth no less than hers doth seem
 to show.

" But wot thou this, thou hardy Titaness,
 That not the worth of any living wight
 May challenge aught in heaven's interest ; ⁹
 Much less the title of old Titan's right :
 For we by conquest of our sov'reign might,
 And by eternal doom of Fates' decree,
 Have won the empire of the heavens bright ;
 Which to ourselves we hold, and to whom we
 Shall worthy deem partakers of our bliss to be.

" Then cease thy idle claim, thou foolish girl ;
 And seek by grace and goodness to obtain
 That place, from which by folly Titan fell :
 Thereto ¹⁰ thou may'st perhaps, if so thou fain, ¹¹
 Have Jove thy gracious lord and sovereign."

So having said, she thus to him replied ,
 " Cease, Saturn's son, to seek by proffer vain
 Of idle hopes t' allure me to thy side,
 For to betray my right before I have it tried.

" But thee, O Jove, no equal ¹² judge I deem
 Of my desert, or of my dueful right ;
 That in thine own behalf may'st partial seem :
 But to the highest him, that is behight ¹³
 Father of Gods and men by equal might,
 To wit, the God of Nature, I appeal."
 Thereat Jove wax'd wroth, and in his sprite
 Did inly grudge, yet did it well conceal ;
 And bade Dan Phœbus scribe her appellation ¹⁴
 seal.

Eftsoons the time and place appointed were,
 Where all, both heav'nly pow'rs and earthly
 wights,

Before great Nature's presence should appear,
 For trial of their titles and best rights ;
 That was, to wit, upon the highest heights
 Of Arlo-hill ¹⁵ (who knows not Arlo-hill ?)
 That is the highest head, in all men's sights,
 Of my old Father Mole, whom shepherd's quill
 Renown'd hath with hymns fit for a rural skill.

And, were it not ill fitting for this file ¹⁶
 To sing of hills and woods 'mongst wars and
 knights,

I would abate the sternness of my style,
 'Mongst these stern stounds ¹⁷ to mingle soft
 delights :

And tell how Arlo, through Diana's spites
 (Being of old the best and fairest hill
 That was in all this Holy Island's ¹⁸ heights),

⁶ Countenance.

⁷ Together.

⁸ Envy, begrudge.

⁹ Interest.

¹⁰ Besides.

¹¹ Desire.

¹² Impartial.

¹³ Called.

¹⁴ Appeal.

¹⁵ Now named Galty More, the loftiest summit in the eastern range of the Ballyhoura hills, called the mountains of Mole in the passage before us, and in "Odin Clout's Come Home Again." A defile of Galty More, it is said, is still known as the "Glen of Ahartow." Arlo is also mentioned by Spenser in his "View of the Present State of Ireland;" so that the name is not merely a poetic fiction.

¹⁶ Record, narrative.

¹⁷ Alarms, assaults.

¹⁸ Ireland's.

Was made the most unpleasant and most ill :
Meanwhile, O Clio, lend Calliopé thy quill.

Whilom when Ireland flourish'd in fame
Of wealth and goodness far above the rest
Of all that bear the British Islands' name,
The gods then us'd, for pleasure and for rest,
Oft to resort thereto, when seem'd them best :
But none of all therein more pleasure found
Than Cynthia,¹ that is sov'reign Queen profest
Of woods and forests, which therein abound,
Sprinkled with wholesome waters more than
most on ground :

But 'mongst them all, as fittest for her game,—
Either for chase of beasts with hound or bow,
Or for to shroud in shade from Phoebus' flame,
Or bathe in fountains that do freshly flow
Or from high hills or from the dales below,—
She chose this Arlo ; where she did resort
With all her nymphs enrang'd on a row,
With whom the woody gods did oft consort ;
For with the Nymphs the Satyrs love to play
and sport :

Amongst the which there was a nymph that
hight

Molanna ; daughter of old Father Mole,
And sister unto Mulla fair and bright :²
Unto whose bed false Bregog whilom stole,
That Shepherd Colin dearly did condole,
And made her luckless loves well known to be :
But this Molanna, were she not so shoal,³
Were no less fair and beautiful than she ;
Yet, as she is, a fairer flood may no man see.

For, first, she springs out of two marble rocks,
On which a grove of oaks high-mounted grows,
That as a garland seems to deck the locks
Of some fair bride, brought forth with pompous
shows

Out of her bow'r, that many flowers strows :
So through the flow'ry dales she tumbling down
Through many woods and shady coverts flows,
That on each side her silver channel crown,
Till to the plain she come, whose valleys she
doth drown.

In her sweet streams Diana us'd oft,
After her sweaty chase and toilsome play,
To bathe herself ; and, after, on the soft
And downy grass her dainty limbs to lay
In covert shade, where none behold her may ;
For much she hated sight of living eye.
Foolish god Faunus, though full many a day
He saw her clad, yet long'd foolishly
To see her naked 'mongst her nymphs in privy.

No way he found to compass his desire,
But to corrupt Molanna, this her maid,
Her to discover for some secret hire :⁴

¹ Diana.

² The poetical title given by Spenser to the river Awbeg, near his residence of Kilcolman Castle. In "Colin Clout's Come Home Again," he describes himself as "keeping his sheep amongst the cool shade of the green alders by the Mulla's shore ;" and he relates the love-story of the Mulla and the Bregog.

³ Shallow. The Molanna, now called the Brackbawn, flows out of the western range of the Ballyhoura hills.

So her with flatt'ring words he first assay'd ;
And, after, pleasing gifts for her purvey'd,⁵
Queen-apples, and red cherries from the tree,
With which he her allur'd, and betray'd
To tell what time he might her Lady see
When she herself did bathe, that he might
secret be.

Thereto⁶ he promis'd, if she would him pleasure

With this small boon, to quit⁷ her with a better ;

To wit, that whereas she had out of measure
Long lov'd the Fanchin,⁸ who by naught did
set her,⁹

That he would undertake for this to get her
To be his love, and of him lik'd well :
Besides all which, he vow'd to be her debtor
For many more good turns than he would tell,
The least of which this little pleasure 'should
excel.

The simple maid did yield to him anon ;
And eft¹⁰ him plac'd where he close¹¹ might
view

That never any saw, save only one,¹²
Who, for his hire to so fool-hardy due,¹³
Was of his hounds devour'd in hunter's hue.¹⁴
Then, as her manner was on sunny day,
Diana, with her nymphs about her, drew
To this sweet spring ; where, doffing her array,
She bath'd her lovely limbs, for Jove a likely
prey.

There Faunus saw that pleas'd much his eye,
And made his heart to tickle in his breast,
That, for great joy of somewhat he did spy,
He could him not contain in silent rest ;
But, breaking forth in laughter, loud profest
His foolish thought : a foolish Faun, indeed,
That couldst not hold thyself so hidden blest,
But wouldest needs thine own conceit aread !¹⁵
Babblers unworthy be of so divine a meed.

The Goddess, all abash'd with that noise,
In haste forth started from the guilty brook ;
And, running straight where as she heard his
voice,

Enclos'd the bush about, and there him took
Like darred lark,¹⁶ not daring up to look
On her whose sight before so much he sought.
Thence forth they drew him by the horns, and
shook

Nigh all to pieces, that they left him naught ;
And then into the open light they forth him
brought.

Like as a housewife, that with busy care
Thinks of her dairy to make wondrous gain,
Finding where as some wicked beast unware

⁴ Reward.

⁵ Provided.

⁶ Moreover.

⁷ Recompense.

⁸ A stream now called the Funcheon.

⁹ Naught esteemed or cared for her.

¹⁰ Soon after.

¹¹ Secretly.

¹² Actæon.

¹³ The reward earned by his foolhardy conduct.

¹⁴ Form, appearance.

¹⁵ Declare.

¹⁶ Like a lark dazzled by the glare of the "darring-glass," or mirror used in catching that bird.

That breaks into her dair'-house, there doth
 drain
 Her creaming pans, and frustrate all her pain,
 Hath, in some snare or gin set close behind,
 Entrapp'd him, and caught into her train,¹
 Then thinks what punishment were best assign'd,
 And thousand deaths deviseth in her vengeful
 mind :

So did Diana and her maidens all
 Use silly Faunus, now within their bail :²
 They mock and scorn him, and him foul miscall ;
 Some by the nose him pluck'd, some by the tail,
 And by his goatish beard some did him hale :
 Yet he (poor soul !) with patience all did bear ;
 For naught against their wills might counter-
 vail :
 Nor aught he said, whatever he did hear ;
 But, hanging down his head, did like a mome³
 appear.

At length, when they had flouted him their fill,
 They gan to cast what penance him to give.
 Some would have gelt him ; but that same
 would spill⁴

The wood-gods' breed, which must for ever live :
 Others would through the river him have drive
 And duck'd deep ; but that seem'd penance light :
 But most agreed, and did this sentence give,
 Him in deer's skin to clad, and in that plight
 To hunt him with their hounds, himself save
 how he might.

But Cynthia's self, more angry than the rest,
 Thought not enough to punish him in sport,
 And of her shame to make a gamesome jest ;
 But gan examine him in straiter sort,
 Which of her nymphs, or other close consort,⁵
 Him thither brought, and her to him betray'd ?
 He, much afear'd, to her confess'd short
 That 'twas Molanna which her so bewray'd.
 Then all at once their hands upon Molanna laid.

But him (according as they had decreed)
 With a deer's skin they cover'd, and then chas'd
 With all their hounds, that after him did speed ;
 But he, more speedy, from them fled more fast
 Than any deer ; so sore him dread aghast.⁶
 They after follow'd all with shrill outcry,
 Shouting as they the heavens would have
 brast ;⁷

That all the woods and dales, where he did fly,
 Did ring again, and loud re-echo to the sky.

So they him follow'd till they weary were ;
 When, back returning to Molann' again,
 They, by commandment of Diana, there
 Her whelm'd with stones : yet Faunus, for her
 pain,

Of her belov'd Fanchin did obtain
 That her he would receive unto his bed.
 So now her waves pass through a pleasant plain,
 Till with the Fanchin she herself do wed,
 And, both combin'd, themselves in one fair
 river spread.

¹ Snare.² Custody.³ A speechless and senseless blockhead.⁴ Destroy.⁵ Companion.⁶ Confounded, terrified.⁷ Burst, rent.⁸ For "read ;" discovered.

Nathless Diana, full of indignation,
 Thenceforth abandon'd her delicious brook ;
 In whose sweet stream, before that bad occasion,
 So much delight to bathe her limbs she took :
 Nor only her, but also quite forsook
 All those fair forests about Arlo hid ;
 And all that mountain, which doth overlook
 The richest champaign that may else be rid ;⁸
 And the fair Shure, in which are thousand
 salmons bred.

Them all, and all that she so dear did weigh,⁹
 Thenceforth she left ; and, parting from the
 place,

Thereon a heavy hapless curse did lay ;
 To wit, that wolves, where she was wont to
 space,¹⁰

Should harbour'd be and all those woods deface,
 And thieves should rob and spoil that coast
 around.

Since which, those woods, and all that goodly
 chase,

Doth to this day with wolves and thieves
 a-bound :

Which too too true that land's indwellers since
 have found !

CANTO VII.

'Pealing¹¹ from Jove to Nature's ear,

Bold Alteration pleads

Large evidence : but Nature soon

Her righteous doom areads.¹²

Al ! whither dost thou now, thou greater
 Muse,¹³

Me from these woods and pleasing forests bring,
 And my frail spirit, that doth oft refuse
 This too high flight, unfit for her weak wing,
 Lift up aloft, to tell of heaven's king
 (Thy sov'reign sire) his fortunate success ;
 And victory in bigger notes to sing
 Which he obtain'd against that Titaness,
 That him of heaven's empire sought to dis-
 possess ?

Yet, since I needs must follow thy behest,
 Do thou my weaker wit with skill inspire,
 Fit for this turn ; and in my feeble breast
 Kindle fresh sparks of that immortal fire
 Which learn'd minds inflameth with desire
 Of heav'nly things : for who but thou alone,
 That art y-born of heav'n and heav'nly sire,
 Can tell things done in heav'n so long y-gone,
 So far past memory of man that may be known ?

Now, at the time that was before agreed,
 The gods assembled all on Arlo Hill ;
 As well those that are sprung of heav'nly seed,
 As those that all the other world do fill,
 And rule both sea and land unto their will :

⁹ Value.¹⁰ Roam.¹¹ Appealing.¹² Pronounces.¹³ Olio now retakes from Calliope—the historic from the epic Muse—the quill which was lent her to describe the fate of sad Molanna.

Only th' infernal pow'rs might not appear ;
 As well for horror of their count'nance ill,
 As for th' unruly fiends which they did fear ;
 Yet Pluto and Proserpina were present there.
 And thither also came all other creatures,
 Whatever life or motion do retain,
 According to their sundry kinds of features,
 That Arlo scarcely could them all contain,
 So full they fill'd ev'ry hill and plain ;
 And had not Nature's Sergeant (that is Order)
 Them well dispos'd by his busy pain,
 And rang'd far abroad in ev'ry border,
 They would have caus'd much confusion and disorder.

Then forth issued (great Goddess) great Dame Nature,
 With goodly port and gracious majesty,
 Being far greater and more tall of stature
 Than any of the gods or pow'rs on high ;
 Yet, certes, by her face and physnomy,¹
 Whether she man or woman inly² were,
 That could not any creature well descry ;
 For with a veil, that wimp'd ev'rywhere,³
 Her head and face was hid, that might to none appear.

That, some do say, was so by skill devis'd
 To hide the terror of her uncouth hue
 From mortal eyes, that should be sore agris'd ;⁴
 For that her face did like a lion shew,
 That eye of wight could not endure to view :
 But others tell that it so beauteous was,
 And round about such beams of splendour threw,
 That it the sun a thousand times did pass,
 Nor could be seen but like an image in a glass.

That well may seemen true ; for well I ween
 That this same day, when she on Arlo sat,
 Her garment was so bright and wondrous sheen,⁵
 That my frail wit cannot devise to what
 It to compare, nor find like stuff to that :
 As those three sacred saints, though else most wise,

Yet on Mount Tabor quite their wits forgat,
 When they their glorious Lord in strange disguise
 Transfigur'd saw ; his garments so did daze⁶
 their eyes.

In a fair plain upon an equal hill
 She plac'd was in a pavilion ;
 Not such as craftsmen by their idle skill
 Are wont for princes' states⁷ to fashion ;
 But th' Earth herself, of her own motion,
 Out of her fruitful bosom made to grow
 Most dainty trees, that, shooting up anon,
 Did seem to bow their blooming heads full low
 For homage unto her, and like a throne did show.

¹ Physiognomy, countenance. ² Really, wholly.

³ Was closely drawn all around her.

⁴ Terrified. ⁵ Shining. ⁶ Dazzle.

⁷ Canopies or pavilions. Chaucer, in "The Court of Love," describes the king and queen "under the cloth of their estate." See reference in note 6, page 202.

⁸ Chaucer.

⁹ "The Assembly of Fowls," or Parliament of Birds.

¹⁰ Meddle.

¹¹ See note 8, page 220. The lines in Chance are,
 "And right as Alain, in his Plaint of Kind,

So hard it is for any living wight
 All her array and vestiments to tell,
 That old Dan Geoffrey⁸ (in whose gentle sprite
 The pure well-head of poesy did dwell)
 In his *Fowls' Parley*⁹ durst not with it mell,¹⁰
 But it transferr'd to Alane,¹¹ who he thought
 Had in his *Plaint of Kind* describ'd it well :
 Which who will read set forth so as it ought,
 Go seek he out that Alane where he may be sought.

And all the earth far underneath her feet
 Was dight¹² with flow'rs, that voluntary grew
 Out of the ground, and sent forth odours sweet ;
 Ten thousand mores¹³ of sundry scent and hue,
 That might delight the smell, or please the view,
 The which the nymphs from all the brooks
 thereby

Had gather'd, they at her foot-stool threw ;
 That richer seem'd than any tapēstry
 That princes' bow'rs adorn with painted imag'ry.

And Mole himself, to honour her the more,
 Did deck himself in freshest fair attire ;
 And his high head, that seemeth always hoar
 With harden'd frosts of former winters' ire,
 He with an oaken garland now did tire ;¹⁴
 As if the love of some new nymph, late seen,
 Had in him kindled youthful fresh desire,
 And made him change his gray attire to green :
 Ah ! gentle Mole, such joyance hath thee well
 beseen.¹⁵

Was never so great joyance since the day
 That all the gods whilom assembled were
 On Hæmus¹⁶ hill, in their divine array,
 To celebrate the solemn bridal cheer
 'Twixt Pelus and Dame Thetis' pointed¹⁷ there :
 Where Phœbus' self, that god of poets hight,
 They say, did sing the spousal hymn full clear,
 That all the gods were ravish'd with delight
 Of his celestial song, and music's wondrous
 might.

This great grandmother of all creatures bred,
 Great Nature, ever young, yet full of eld ;
 Still moving, yet unmov'd from her stead ;¹⁸
 Unseen of any, yet of all beheld ;
 Thus sitting in her throne, as I have tell'd,¹⁹
 Before her came Dame Mutability ;
 And, being low before her presence fell'd²⁰
 With meek obeisance and humility,
 Thus gan her plaintive plea with words to
 amplify :

"To thee, O greatest Goddess, only great !
 A humble suppliant, lo ! I lowly fly,
 Seeking for right, which I of thee entreat,
 Who right to all dost deal indifferently,²¹
 Damning²² all wrong and tortious²³ injury

Deviseth Nature of such array and face,
 In such array men might her there find."

¹² Decked.

¹³ Roots, plants ; the word, surviving in provincial dialects, may be traced to the Anglo-Saxon, "myrran," to spread. ¹⁴ Attire. ¹⁵ Beseemed.

¹⁶ Spenser is here again at fault ; the nuptials of Pelus and Thetis were celebrated on Mount Pelion.

¹⁷ Appointed.

¹⁸ Place.

¹⁹ Told.

²⁰ Fallen prostrate.

²¹ Impartially. ²² Condemning. ²³ Wrongful.

Which any of thy creatures do to other,
Oppressing them with pow'r unequally ;
Since of them all thou art the equal mother,
And knittest each to each, as brother unto
brother.

"To thee therefore of this same Jove I plain,¹
And of his fellow gods that feign to be,
That challenge² to themselves the whole world's
reign,

Of which the greatest part is due to me,
And heav'n itself by heritage in fee :
For heav'n and earth I both alike do deem,
Since heav'n and earth are both alike to thee ;
And gods no more than men thou dost esteem :
For ev'n the gods to thee, as men to gods, do
seem.

"Then weigh, O sov'reign goddess, by what
right

These gods do claim the world's whole sov'-
reignty ;

And that³ is only due unto thy might,
Arrogate to themselves ambitiously :
As for the gods' own principality,
Which Jove usurps unjustly, that to be
My heritage Jove's self cannot deny,
From my great grandsire Titan unto me
Deriv'd by due descent ; as is well known to
thee.

"Yet mangré⁴ Jove, and all his gods beside,
I do possess the world's most regiment ;⁵
As, if ye please it into parts divide,
And ev'ry part's inholders⁶ to convent,⁷
Shall to your eyes appear incontinent.⁸
And first, the Earth (great mother of us all),
That only seems unmov'd and permanent,
And unto Mutability not thrall,
Yet is she chang'd in part, and eke in general :

"For all that from her springs, and is y-bred,
However fair it flourish for a time,
Yet see we soon decay ; and, being dead,
To turn again unto their earthly slime :
Yet out of their decay and mortal crime⁹
We daily see new creatures to arise,
And of their winter spring another prime,¹⁰
Unlike in form, and chang'd by strange disguise :
So turn

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"As for
The bees
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¹ Compl
² Claim
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⁴ The r
⁵ Inhat

And ev'ry river still doth ebb and flow ;
Nor any lake that seems most still and slow,
Nor pool so small, that can his smoothness hold
When any wind doth under heaven blow ;
With which the clouds are also toss'd and roll'd,
Now like great hills, and straight like sluices
them unfold.

"So likewise are all watery living wights
Still toss'd and turn'd with continual change,
Never abiding in their steadfast plights :
The fish, still floating, do at random range,
And never rest, but evermore exchange
Their dwelling places, as the streams them carry :
Nor have the watery fowls a certain grange¹¹
Wherein to rest, nor in one stead do tarry ;
But fitting still do fly, and still their places vary.

"Next is the air ; which who feels not by sense
(For of all sense it is the middle mean¹²)

To flit still, and with subtile influence
Of his thin spirit all creatures to maintain
In state of life ? O weak life ! that does lean
On thing so tickle¹⁴ as th' unsteady air,
Which ev'ry hour is chang'd, and alter'd clean
With ev'ry blast that bloweth, foul or fair :
The fair doth it prolong ; the foul doth it impair.

"Therain the changes infinite behold,
Which to her creatures ev'ry minute chance ;
Now boiling hot ; straight freezing deadly cold ;
Now fair sunshine, that makes all skip and
dance ;

Straight bitter storms, and baleful countenance,
That makes them all to shiver and to shake :
Rain, hail, and snow do pay them sad penance,
And dreadful thunder-claps (that make them
quake)

With flames and flashing lights that thousand
changes make.

"Last is the fire ; which, though it live for ever,
Nor can be quenched quite, yet ev'ry day
We see his parts, so soon as they do sever,
To lose their heat and shortly to decay ;
So makes himself his own consuming prey :
Nor any living creatures doth he breed,
But all that are of others bred doth slay,
And with their death his cruel life doth feed ;

But, after wrong was lov'd, and justice sold,
She left th' unrighteous world, and was to
heav'n extoll'd.¹

Next him September march'd, eke on foot ;
Yet was he heavy laden with the spoil
Of harvest's riches, which he made his boot,²
And him enrich'd with bounty of the soil :
In his one hand, as fit for harvest's toil,
He held a knife-hook ; and in th' other hand
A Pair of Weights,³ with which he did assay⁴
Both more and less, where it in doubt did stand,
And equal gave to each as Justice duly scann'd.

Then came October, full of merry glee ;
For yet his noule⁵ was totty⁶ of the must⁷
Which he was treading in the wine-fats' sea,
And of the joyous oil, whose gentle gust⁸
Made him so frolic and so full of lust :⁹
Upon a dreadful Scorpion he did ride,
The same which by Diana's doom unjust
Slew great Orion ; and eke by his side
He had his ploughing-share and coulter ready
tied.

Next was November ; he full gross and fat
As fed with lard, and that right well might
seem ;

For he had been a-fatt'ing hogs of late,
That yet his brows with sweat did reek and
steam,

And yet the season was full sharp and breme ;¹⁰
In planting eke he took no small delight,
Whereon he rode, not easy was to deem ;
For it a dreadful Centaur was in sight,
The seed of Saturn and fair Nais,¹¹ Chiron hight.

And after him came next the chill December :
Yet he, through merry feasting which he made
And great bonfires, did not the cold remember ;
His Saviour's birth his mind so much did glad.
Upon a shaggy-bearded Goat he rode,
The same wherewith Dan Jove in tender years,
They say, was nourish'd by th' Idæan maid ;¹²
And in his hand a broad deep bowl he bears,
Of which he freely drinks a health to all his

Then came old January, wrapp'd well
In many weeds to keep the cold away ;
Yet did he quake and quiver like to quell,¹³
And blow his nails to warm them if he may ;
For they were n

A hatchet keen,
And from the tre
Upon a huge gre
From whose wid
Roman flo

And lastly came
In an old waggon

¹ Elevated.

² Denoting the o

³ Determines.

⁴ Dizzy.

⁵ Flavour

⁶ Piercing, inciel

⁷ Nais, or Charicl

Saturn and Philyr

page 430

⁸ Jupiter was bro

by the nymphs Ad

the milk of the go

Drawn of two Fishes, for the season fitting,
Which through the flood before did softly slide
And swim away ; yet had he by his side
His plough and harness fit to till the ground,
And tools to prune the trees, before the pride
Of hasting Prime¹⁷ did make them burgeon¹⁸
round.

So pass'd the twelve Months forth, and their
due places found.

And after these there came the Day and Night,
Riding together both with equal pace ;
Th' one on a palfrey black, the other white :
But Night had cover'd her uncomely face
With a black veil, and held in hand a mace,¹⁹
On top whereof the moon and stars were pight,²⁰
And Sleep and Darkness round about did trace :²¹
But Day did bear upon his sceptre's height
The goodly sun encompass'd all with beams
bright.

Then came the Hours, fair daughters of high
Jove

And timely Night ; the which were all endued
With wondrous beauty, fit to kindle love ;
But they were virgins all, and love eschew'd,
That might foralack²² the charge to them fore-
shew'd²³

By mighty Jove ; who did them porters make
Of heaven's gate (whence all the gods issued)
Which they did daily watch, and nightly wake
By even turns, nor ever did their charge forsake.

And after all came Life ; and lastly Death :
Death with most grim and grisly visage seen,
Yet is he naught but parting of the breath ;
Nor aught to see, but like a shade to ween,
Unbodi'd, unsoul'd, unheard, unseen :
But Life was like a fair young lusty boy,
Such as they feign Dan Cupid to have been,
Full of delightful health and lively joy,
Deck'd all with flow'rs and wings of gold fit to
employ.

When these were past, thus gan the Titaness ;
" Lo ! mighty Mother, now be judge, and say
Whether in all thy creatures more or less
CHANGE doth not reign and bear the greatest
away :

For who sees not that Time on all doth prey ?
But times do change and move continually :

WHEN I bethink me on that speech whilere¹
 Of Mutability, and well it weigh ;
 Me seems, that though she all unworthy were
 Of th' heavens' rule, yet, very sooth to say,
 In all things else she bears the greatest away :
 Which makes me loathe this state of life so
 tickle,²

And love of things so vain to cast away ;
 Whose flow'ring pride, so fading and so fickle,
 Short Time shall soon cut down with his con-
 suming sickle !

¹ Lately

Of that same time when no more change
 shall be,
 But steadfast rest of all things, firmly stay'd
 Upon the pillars of Eternity,
 That is contrair to Mutability :
 For all that moveth doth in change delight :
 But thenceforth all shall rest eternally
 With Him that is the God of Sabaoth hight :
 Oh ! that great Sabaoth God, grant me that
 Sabbath's sight !

² Unstable.

THE END OF THE FARRIE QUEEN.

who for that he is uncouth (as said Chaucer) is unkiss'd, and, unknown to most men, is regarded but of a few. But I doubt not, so soon as his name shall come into the knowledge of men, and his worthiness be sounded in the trump of Fame, but that he shall be not only kiss'd, but also beloved of all, embraced of the most, and wonder'd at of the best. No less, I think, deserves his wittiness in devising, his pithiness in uttering, his complaints of love so lovely, his discourses of pleasure so pleasantly, his pastoral rudeness, his moral wisdom, his due observing of decorum everywhere, in personages, in seasons, in matter, in speech; and generally, in all seemly simplicity of handling his matters and framing his words: the which, of many things which in him be strange, I know will seem the strangest, the words themselves being so ancient, the knitting of them so short and intricate, and the whole period and compass of speech so delightful for the roundness, and so grave for the strangeness. And first of the words to speak, I grant they be something hard, and of most men unused, yet both English, and also used of most excellent authors and most famous poets. In whom when as this our Poet hath been much travailed and thoroughly read, how could it be (as that worthy orator said) but that walking in the sun, although for other cause he walks, yet needs he must be sunburnt; and, having the sound of those ancient poets still ringing in his ears, he must needs, in singing, hit out some of their tunes. But whether he useth them by such casualty and custom, or of set purpose and choice, as thinking them fittest for such rustical rudeness of shepherds, either for that their rough sound would make his rhymes more ragged and rustical, or else because such old and obsolete words are most used of country folk, sure I think, and think I think not amiss, that they bring great grace, and, as one would say, authority to the verse. For all be, amongst many other faults, it specially be objected of Valla¹ against Livy, and of other against Sallust, that with over much study they affect antiquity, as coveting thereby credence and honour of elder years; yet I am of opinion, and eke the best learned are of the like, that those ancient solemn words are a great ornament, both in the one and in the other: the one labouring to set forth in his work an eternal image of antiquity, and the other carefully discouraging matters of gravity and importance. For, if my memory fail not, Tully, in that book wherein he endeavoureth to set forth the pattern of a perfect orator,² saith that oftentimes an ancient word maketh the style seem grave, and as it were reverend, no otherwise than we honour and reverence gray hairs for a certain religious regard which we have of old age. Yet neither everywhere must old words be stuffed in, nor the common dialect and manner of speaking so corrupted thereby, that, as in old buildings, it

seem disorderly and ruinous. But all as in most exquisite pictures they use to blaze and portray not only the dainty lineaments of beauty, but also round about it to shadow the rude thickets and craggy cliffs, that, by the baseness of such parts, more excellency may accrue to the principal: for oftentimes we find ourselves, I know not how, singularly delighted with the show of such natural rudeness, and take great pleasure in that disorderly order. Even so do those rough and harsh terms enlume, and make more clearly to appear, the brightness of brave and glorious words. So oftentimes a discord in music maketh a comely concordance: so great delight took the worthy poet Alcæus to behold a blemish in the joint of a well-shaped body. But, if any will rashly blame such his purposes in choice of old and unwonted words, him may I more justly blame and condemn, or³ of witless headiness in judging, or of heedless hardness in condemning: for, not marking the compass of his bent, he will judge of the length of his cast: for in my opinion it is one especial praise of many, which are due to this Poet, that he hath laboured to restore, as to their rightful heritage, such good and natural English words as have been long time out of use, and almost clean disherited. Which is the only cause that our mother tongue, which truly of itself is both full enough for prose, and stately enough for verse, hath long time been counted most bare and barren of both. Which default when as some endeavoured to salve and recure, they patched up the holes with pieces and rags of other languages, borrowing here of the French, there of the Italian, everywhere of the Latin; not weighing how ill those tongues accord with themselves, but much worse with ours: So now they have made our English tongue a gallimaufrey, or hodge-podge of all other speeches. Other some, not so well seen⁴ in the English tongue as perhaps in other languages, if they happen to hear an old word, albeit very natural and significant, cry out straightway, that we speak no English, but gibberish, or rather such as in old time Evander's mother⁵ spake: whose first shame is, that they are not ashamed, in their own mother tongue, to be counted strangers and aliens. The second shame no less than the first, that whatso they understand not, they straightway deem to be senseless, and not at all to be understood. Much like to the mole in Æsop's fable, that, being blind herself, would in no wise be persuaded that any beast could see. The last, more shameful than both, that of their own country and natural speech, which together with their nurse's milk they sucked, they have so base regard and bastard judgment, that they will not only themselves not labour to garnish and beautify it, but also repine that of other it should be embellished. Like to the dog in the manger, that himself can eat no hay, and yet barketh at the hungry bullock, that so

¹ Laurence Valla, a celebrated Italian philologist, who lived in the first half of the fifteenth century, and made important contributions to the revival of learning.

² Cicero, "De Oratore." ³ Either. ⁴ Instructed.

⁵ Carmentis, who fled with her son from Arcadia to Latium, and uttered oracles on the Capitoline Hill.

cause I pray you, Sir, if envy shall stir up any wrongful accusation, defend with your mighty rhetoric and other your rare gifts of learning, as you can, and shield with your good will, as you ought, against the malice and outrage of so many enemies, as I know will be set on fire with the sparks of his kindled glory. And thus recommending the Author unto you, as unto his most special good friend, and myself unto you both, as one making singular account of two so very good and so choice friends, I bid you both most heartily farewell, and commit you and your commendable studies to the tuition of the Greatest.

Your own assuredly to be commanded,
E. K.

P.S.—Now I trust, M. Harvey, that upon

sight of your special friend's and fellow poet's doings, or else for envy of so many unworthy Quidams, which catch at the garland which to you alone is due, you will be persuaded to pluck out of the hateful darkness those so many excellent English poems of yours which lie hid, and bring them forth to eternal light. Trust me, you do both them great wrong, in depriving them of the desired sun; and also yourself, in smothering your deserved praises; and all men generally, in withholding from them so divine pleasures, which they might conceive of your gallant English verses, as they have already done of your Latin poems, which, in my opinion, both for invention and elocution, are very delicate and super-excellent. And thus again I take my leave of my good M. Harvey. From my lodging at London this tenth of April, 1579.

THE GENERAL ARGUMENT

OF THE WHOLE BOOK.

*Little, I hope, needeth me at large to discourse the first original of *Æglogues*, having already touched the same. But, for the word *Æglogues* I know is unknown to most, and also mistaken of some of the best learned (as they think), I will say somewhat thereof, being not at all impertinent to my present purpose.*

*They were first of the Greeks, the inventors of them, called *Æglogai*, as it were, *Ægon*, or *Æginomon logi*,¹ that is, *Goatherds' tales*. For although in *Virgil* and others the speakers be more shepherds than goatherds, yet *Theocritus*, in whom is more ground of authority than in *Virgil*, this specially from that deriving, as from the first head and wellspring, the whole invention of these *Æglogues*, maketh goatherds the persons and authors of his tales. This being, who seeth not the grossness of such as by colour of learning would make us believe that they are more rightly termed *Elogai*, as they would say, extraordinary discourses of unnecessary matter: which definition all be in substance and meaning it agree with the nature of the thing, yet no whit answereth with the analysis and interpretation of the word. For they be not termed *Elogues*, but *Æglogues*; which sentence this Author very well observing, upon good judgment, though indeed few goatherds have to do herein, nevertheless doubteth² not to call them by the used and best known name. Other curious discourses hereof I reserve to greater occasion.*

*These twelve *Æglogues*, everywhere answering*

¹ More correctly, "*Algon*, or *Algonomon logoi*"—*Ἀλγών* or *Ἀλγονόμων λόγοι*—the discourses or words of goatherds. But the word "*Eclogue*" is really derived from *ἐκλέγω*, I select; *ἐκλογή*, a selection, or the thing selected as best; and means that

*to the seasons of the twelve months, may be well divided into three forms or ranks. For either they be plaintive, as the first, the sixth, the eleventh, and the twelfth; or recreative, such as all those be which contain matter of love, or commendation of special personages; or moral, which for the most part be mixed with some satirical bitterness: namely, the second, of reverence due to old age; the fifth, of coloured deceit; the seventh and ninth, of dissolute shepherds and pastors; the tenth, of contempt of poetry and pleasant wits. And to this division may everything herein be reasonably applied; a few only except, whose special purpose and meaning I am not privy to. And thus much generally of these twelve *Æglogues*. Now will we speak particularly of all, and first of the first, which he calleth by the first month's name, *January*: wherein to some he may seem foully to have faulted,³ in that he erroneously beginneth with that month, which beginneth not the year. For it is well known, and stoutly maintained with strong reasons of the learned, that the year beginneth in *March*; for then the sun reneweth his finished course, and the seasonable spring refresheth the earth, and the pleasure thereof, being buried in the sadness of the dead winter now worn away, reliveth.⁴*

*This opinion maintain the old Astrologers and Philosophers, namely, the reverend Andalo, and Macrobius in his "*Holy Days of Saturn*;" which account also was generally observed both of Grecians and Romans. But, saving the leave of such learned heads, we maintain a custom of counting the seasons from the month *January*, upon a more special cause than the heathen Philosophers ever could conceive; that is, for the Incarnation of our mighty Saviour and Eternal Redeemer the Lord Christ, who, as then renewing which the author has chosen to put forth as his best work.*

² Hesitateth.

³ Erred.

⁴ In the procession of the months, in the second canto of *Mutability*, the order is observed the departure from which is here defended.

Thy summer proud, with daffodillies dight;
And now is come thy winter's stormy state,
Thy mantle marr'd wherein thou maskedst
late.

"Such rage as winter's reigneth in my heart,
My life-blood freezing with unkindly cold;
Such stormy stours¹ do breed my baleful smart,
As if my year were waste and waxen old;
And yet, alas! but now my spring begun,
And yet, alas! it is already done.

"You naked trees, whose shady leaves are lost,
Wherein the birds were wont to build their bow'r,
And now are cloth'd with moss and hoary frost,
Instead of blossoms, wherewith your buds did
flow'r;

I see your tears that from your boughs do rain,
Whose drops in dreary icicles remain.

"All so my lustful leaf is dry and sear,
My timely buds with wailing all are wasted;
The blossom which my branch of youth did bear
With breath'd sighs is blown away and blasted;
And from mine eyes the drizzling tears de-
scend,

As on your boughs the icicles depend.

"Thou feeble flock! whose fleece is rough and
rent,
Whose knees are weak through fast and evil
fare,

May'st witness well, by thy ill government,
Thy master's mind is overcome with care:

Thou weak, I wan; thou lean, I quite for-
lorn:

With mourning pine I; you with pining
mourn.

"A thousand siths² I curse that careful hour
Wherein I long'd the neighbour town to see,
And eke ten thousand siths I bless the stour³
Wherein I saw so fair a sight as she:

Yet all for naught: such sight hath bred my
bane.

Ah, God! that love should breed both joy
and pain!

"It is not Hobbinol⁴ wherefor I plain,
All be my love he seek with daily suit;
His clownish gifts and court'sies I disdain,
His kids, his cracknels, and his early fruit.

Ah, foolish Hobbinol! thy gifts be vain;
Colin them gives to Rosalind⁵ again.

"I love that lass (alas! why do I love?)
And am forlorn (alas! why am I lorn?)
She deigns not my good will, but doth reprove,
And of my rural music holdeth scorn.

Shepherd's device she hateth as the snake,
And laughs the songs that Colin Clout doth
make.

"Wherefore, my pipe, all be rude Pan thou
please,

¹ Attacks, calamities.

² Times.

³ Occasion, chance.

⁴ Under this name is understood to be represented
Spenser's University companion, Gabriel Harvey.

⁵ "Rosalind is a feigned name, which, being well
ordered, will bewray the very name of his love and
mistress, whom by that name he coloureth."—E. K.

Yet for thou pleasest not where most I would;
And thou, unlucky Muse, that won'tst to ease
My musing mind, yet canst not when thou
should;

Both pipe and Muse shall sore the while
aby."⁶

So broke his oaten pipe, and down did lie.

By that the welk'd Phœbus⁷ gan avail⁸
His weary wain; and now the frosty Night
Her mantle black through heav'n gan over-
hale;⁹

Which seen, the pensive boy, half in despite,
Arose, and homeward drove his sunn'd sheep,
Whose hanging heads did seem his careful
case to weep.

COLIN'S EMBLEM:

Ancora speme. (Hope is my anchor.)

FEBRUARY.

ÆGLOGA SECUNDA.—ARGUMENT.

*This Ælogue is rather moral and general, than bent to
any secret or particular purpose. It specially con-
taineth a discourse of old age, in the person of The-
not, an old shepherd, who, for his crookedness and
unlustiness, is scorned of Cuddie, an unhappy herd-
man's boy. The matter very well accordeth with the
season of the month, the year now drooping, and as
it were drawing to his last age. For as in this time
of year, so then in our bodies, there is a dry and
withering cold, which congealeth the curdled blood,
and freezeeth the weather-beaten flesh, with storms of
Fortune and hoar-frosts of Care. To which pur-
pose the old man telleth a tale of the Oak and the
Brier, so lively, and so feelingly, as, if the thing
were set forth in some picture before our eyes, more
plainly could not appear.*

Cuddie. Thenot.

C. AH for pity! will rank winter's rage
These bitter blasts never gin t' assuage?
The keen cold blows through my beaten hide,
All as I were through the body gride:¹⁰
My ragged ronts¹¹ all ahiver and shake,
As do high towers in an earthquake:
They wont in the wind wag their wriggle tails
Park¹² as a peacock; but now it avals¹³

T. Lewdly¹⁴ complainest, thou lary lad,
Of winter's wrack for making thee sad.
Must not the world wend in his common course,
From good to bad, and from bad to worse,
From worse unto that is worst of all,
And then return to his former fall?¹⁵
Who will not suffer the stormy time,
Where will he live till the lusty prime?¹⁶
Self have I worn out thrice thirty years,

⁶ Abide, suffer.

⁷ The waning sun.

⁸ Bring down.

⁹ Pierced.

¹⁰ Pert, lively.

¹¹ Foolish, ignorantly.

¹² Spring.

¹³ Draw over.

¹⁴ Young bullocks.

¹⁵ Droops.

¹⁶ State.

Nor for fruit nor for shadow serves thy stock ;
 Seest how fresh my flowers be spread,
 Dy'd in lily white and crimson red,
 With leaves engrain'd in lusty green ;
 Colours meet to clothe a maiden queen ?
 Thy waste bigness but cumbereth the ground,
 And dirks¹ the beauty of my blossoms round :
 The mouldy moss, which thee accloyeth,²
 My cinnamon smell too much annoyeth :
 Wherefore soon I read³ thee hence remove,
 Lest thou the price of my displeasure prove.
 So spake this bold Briar with great disdain :
 Little him answer'd the Oak again,
 But yielded, with shame and grief adaw'd,⁴
 That of a weed he was overcraw'd.⁵

"It chanc'd after, upon a day,
 The husbandman's self to come that way,
 Of custom for to survive his ground,
 And his trees of state in compass round :
 Him when the spiteful Briar had espied,
 Causeless complain'd, and loudly cried
 Unto his lord, stirring up stern strife :
 'O my liege lord ! the god of my life,
 Pleaseth you ponder your suppliant's plaint,
 Caused of wrong and cruel constraint
 Which I your poor vassal daily endure ;
 And, but⁶ your goodness the same recure,⁷
 Am like for desperate dool⁸ to die,
 Through felonous force of mine enemy.'

"Greatly aghast with this piteous plea,
 Him rested the Goodman on the lea,
 And bade the Briar in his plaint proceed.
 With painted words then gan this proud weed
 (As most usen ambitious folk)
 His colour'd crime with craft to cloak.

"Ah, my sovereign ! lord of creatures all,
 Thou placer of plants both humble and tall,
 Was not I planted of thine own hand,
 To be the primrose⁹ of all thy land ;
 With flow'ring blossoms to furnish the prime,¹⁰
 And scarlet berries in summer time ?
 How falls it then that this faded Oak,
 Whose body is sear, whose branches broke,
 Whose naked arms stretch unto the fire,¹¹
 Unto such tyranny doth aspire ;
 Hind'ring with his shade my lovely light,
 And robbing me of the sweet sun's sight ?
 So beat his old boughs my tender side,
 That oft the blood springeth from wounds
 wide ;

Untimely my flowers fore'd to fall,
 That be the honour of your coronal :
 And oft he lets his canker-worms light
 Upon my branches, to work me more spite ;
 And oft his hoary locks¹² down doth cast,
 Wherewith my fresh flow'rets be defac'd.
 For this, and many more such outrage,
 Craving your goodlihead to assuage
 The rancorous rigour of his might,
 Naught ask I, but only to hold my right ;

1 Obscure, 'darkness.

2 Encumbereth.

3 Confounded.

4 Unless.

5 Grief.

6 Spring.

7 Withered leaves.

8 Counsel.

9 Overcrowded.

7 Redress.

10 The chief flower.

11 Are fit only for firewood.

Submitting me to your good suff'rance,
 And praying to be guarded from grievance.'

"To this the Oak cast him to reply
 Well as he could ; but his enemy
 Had kindled such coals of displeasure,
 That the Goodman n'ould¹³ stay his leisure,
 But home him hasted with furious heat,
 Increasing his wrath with many a threat :
 His harmful hatchet he hent¹⁴ in hand
 (Alas ! that it so ready should stand !)
 And to the field alone he speedeth
 (Ay little help to harm there needeth !)
 Anger n'ould let him speak to the tree,
 Enauntre¹⁵ his rage might cool'd be ;
 But to the root bent his sturdy stroke,
 And made many wounds in the waste Oak.
 The axe's edge did oft turn again,
 As half unwilling to cut the grain ;
 Seem'd the senseless iron did fear,
 Or to wrong holy eld did forbear ;
 For it had been an ancient tree,
 Sacred with many a mystery,
 And often cross'd with the priests' crew,
 And often hallow'd with holy-water dew :
 But such fancies were foolery,
 And brought this Oak to this misery ;
 For naught might they quiten¹⁶ him from decay,
 For fiercely the Goodman at him did lay :
 The block oft groan'd under the blow,
 And sigh'd to see his near overthrow.
 In fine, the steel had pierc'd his pith,
 Then down to the earth he fell forthwith.
 His wondrous weight made the ground to quake,
 Th' earth shrank under him, and seem'd to
 shake :—

There lieth the Oak, piti'd of none !

"Now stands the Briar like a lord alone,
 Puff'd up with pride and vain pleasure ;
 But all this glee had no continuance :
 For oftsoons winter gan to approach ;
 The blustering Boreas did encroach,
 And beat upon the solitary Brere ;
 For now no succour was seen him near.
 Now gan he repent his pride too late ;
 For, naked left and disconsolate,
 The biting frost nipp'd his stalk dead,
 The watery wet weigh'd down his head,
 And heap'd snow burden'd him so sore,
 That now upright he can stand no more ;
 And, being down, is trod in the dirt
 Of cattle, and bruise'd, and sorely hurt.
 Such was th' end of this ambitious Brere,
 For scorning eld"—

C. Now I pray thee, shepherd, tell it not
 forth :

Here is a long tale, and little worth.
 So long have I listen'd to thy speech,
 That grafted to the ground is my breech ;
 My heart-blood is well nigh from¹⁷ I feel,
 And my galage¹⁸ grown fast to my heel ;

13 Would not.

14 Seized.

15 "In adventure," like "parauntre" for "paradventure."

16 In case that.

17 Frozen ; German, "gefroren."

18 M. K. explains this as "a start-up, or clownish shoe ;" French, "galoches."

But little ease of thy lewd¹ tale I tasted:
His thee home, shepherd, the day is nigh wasted.

THENOT'S EMBLEM :

*Iddio, perche è vecchio,
Fa suoi al suo casempio.*

(God, because He is old, makes His own like to Himself.)

CUDDIE'S EMBLEM :

*Nisno vecchio
Spaventa Iddio.*

(No old man fears God.)

MARCH.

ÆGLOGA TERTIA.—ARGUMENT.

In this Æglogue two shepherds' boys, taking occasion of the season, begin to make purpose² of love, and other pleasantries which to spring-time is most agreeable. The special meaning hereof is, to give certain marks and tokens, to know Cupid the poets' god of Love. But more particularly, I think, in the person of Thomalin is meant some secret friend, who scorned Love and his knights so long, till at length himself was entangled, and uncovers wounded with the dart of some beautiful regard, which is Cupid's arrow.

Willy. Thomalin.

W. THOMALIN, why sitten we so,
As waren overwent³ with woe,

Upon so fair a morrow?

The joyous time now nigheth fast
That shall allege⁴ this bitter blast,
And slake the winter sorrow.

T. Sicker, Willy, thou warnest well;
For winter's wrath begins to quell,⁵

And pleasant spring appeareth:

The grass now gins to be refresh'd,
The swallow peeps out of her nest,
And cloudy welkin⁶ clearerth.

W. Seest not this same hawthorn stud,⁷

How braggy⁸ it begins to bud,

And utter⁹ his tender head?

Flora now calleth forth each flower,
And bids make ready Maia's bower,

That new is uprist from bed:

Then shall we sporten in delight,
And learn with Lettice¹⁰ to wax light,

That scornfully looks askance;

Then will we little Love awake,

That now sleepeth in Lethe Lake,

And pray him leaden our dance.

T. Willy, I ween thou be asot:¹¹

For lusty Love still sleepeth not,

But is abroad at his game.

W. How ken'st¹² thou that he is awoke?

Or hast thyself his slumber broke?

Or made privy to the same?

¹ Foolish.

² As if we were overcome.

³ Abate.

⁷ Trunk, stock.

⁹ Put forth.

¹⁰ "The name of some country lass."—E. K.

¹¹ Stupid, besotted.

¹² By chance, haply.

² Conversation.

⁴ Allay.

⁶ Sky, heaven.

⁸ Proudly, bravely.

⁹ Put forth.

¹³ Knowest.

¹⁴ Declare.

T. No; but happily¹³ I him spied,
Where in a bush he did him hide,
With wings of purple and blue;
And, were not that my sheep would stray,
The privy marks I would bewray¹⁴

Whereby by chance I him knew.

W. Thomalin, have no care forthy;¹⁵

Myself will have a double eye,

Alike to my flock and thine;

For, alas! at home I have a sire,

A stepdame eke, as hot as fire,

That duly a-days¹⁶ counts mine.

T. Nay, but thy seeing will not serve,

My sheep for that may chance to swarve,

And fall into some mischief:

For sithens¹⁷ is but the third morrow

That I chanc'd to fall asleep, with sorrow,

And wak'd again with grief;

The while this same unhappy ewe,

Whose clouted¹⁸ leg her hurt doth shew,

Fell headlong into a dell,

And there unjointed both her bones:

Might her neck been jointed at once,¹⁹

She should have need no more spell;²⁰

Th' elf was so wanton and so wood²¹

(But now I throw can better good²²),

She might ne gang²³ on the green.

W. Let be, as may be, that is past;

That is to come, let be forecast:

Now tell us what thou hast seen.

T. It was upon a holiday,

When shepherds' grooms have leave to play,

I cast to go a shooting;

Long wand'ring up and down the land,

With bow and bolts in either hand,

For birds in bushes tooting,²⁴

At length within the ivy tod²⁵

(There shrouded was the little god),

I heard a busy bustling;

I bent my bolt against the bush,

List'ning if anything did rush,

But then heard no more rustling.

Then, peeping close into the thicket,

Might see the moving of some quick,²⁶

Whose shape appear'd not;

But were it fairy, fiend, or snake,

My courage yearn'd it to awake,

And manfully thereto shot:

With that sprang forth a naked swain,

With spotted wings like peacock's train,

And laughing leapt²⁷ to a tree;

His gilden quiver at his back,

And silver bow, which was but slack,

Which lightly he bent at me:

That seeing, I levell'd again,

And shot at him with might and main,

As thick as it had hail'd.

So long I shot, that all was spent;

Then pumy²⁸ stones I hast'ly hent,

And threw; but naught avail'd:

¹⁵ For that cause.

¹⁷ Since.

¹⁹ At the same time.

²⁰ Charm to preserve or recover health.

²¹ Wild.

²² She could not go.

²³ Thick bush.

²⁷ Leaped.

¹⁶ Daily.

¹⁸ Mended, bound up.

²⁴ She knows better.

²⁵ Searching.

²⁶ Some living thing.

²⁸ Fumice.

He was so wimble and so wight,¹
 From bough to bough he leap'd light,
 And oft the pumies latch'd :²
 Therewith afraid I ran away ;
 But he, that erst³ seem'd but to play,
 A shaft in earnest snatch'd,
 And hit me, running, in the heel :
 For then⁴ I little smart did feel,
 But soon it sore increas'd ;
 And now it rankleth more and more,
 And inwardly it fest'reth sore,
 Nor wot I how to cease it.
 W. Thomalin, I pity thy plight,
 Pardie,⁵ with Love thou diddest fight ;
 I know him by a token :
 For once I heard my father say,
 How he him caught upon a day
 (Whereof he will be wroken⁶),
 Entangled in a fowling net,
 Which he for carrion crows had set
 That in our pear-tree haunted :
 Then said, he was a wing'd lad,
 But bow and shafts as then none had,
 Else had he sore been daunted.
 But see, the welkin thicks apace,
 And stooping Phoebus steeps his face ;
 It's time to haste us homeward.

WILLY'S EMBLEM :

*To be wise and eke to love,
 Is granted scarce to gods above.*

THOMALIN'S EMBLEM :

*Of honey and of gall in love there is store ;
 The honey is much, but the gall is more.*

APRIL.

ÆGLOGA QUARTA.—ARGUMENT.

This Æglogue is purposely intended to the honour and praise of our most gracious Sovereign, Queen Elisabeth. The speakers herein be Hobbinol and Thenot, two shepherds : the which Hobbinol, being before mentioned greatly to have loved Colin, is here set forth more largely, complaining him of that boy's great misadventure in love ; whereby his mind was alienated and withdrawn not only from him, who most loved him, but also from all former delights and studies, as well in pleasant piping, as cunning rhyming and singing, and other his laudable exercises. Whereby he taketh occasion, for proof of his more excellency and skill in poetry, to record a song, which the said Colin sometime made in honour of her Majesty, whom abruptly he termeth Elisa.

Thenot. Hobbinol.

T. TELL me, good Hobbinol, what gaze thee greet ?⁷

What! hath some wolf thy tender lambs y-torn?

¹ So nimble and active.

² Before.

³ Of a surety.

⁴ What makes thee weep?

⁵ Excelled.

⁶ What sort of lad is he? The idiom is that of the Germans, "Was für ein Junge ist er?"

⁷ Caught.

⁸ At the time.

⁹ Revenged.

¹⁰ Because.

Or is thy bagpipe broke, that sounds so sweet?
 Or art thou of thy lov'd lass forlorn?
 Or be thine eyes attemper'd to the year,
 Quenching the gasping furrows' thirst with rain?

Like April show'r, so stream the trickling tears
 Adown thy cheek, to quench thy thirsty pain.
 H. Nor this, nor that, so much doth make me mourn,

But for⁸ the lad, whom long I lov'd so dear,
 Now loves a lass that all his love doth scorn :
 He, plung'd in pain, his tress'd locks doth tear ;
 Shepherds' delights he doth them all forswear ;
 His pleasant pipe, which made us merriment,
 He wilfully hath broke, and doth forbear
 His wonted songs wherein he all outwent.⁹

T. What is he for a lad¹⁰ you so lament?
 Is love such pinching pain to them that prove?
 And hath he skill to make¹¹ so excellent,
 Yet hath so little skill to bridle love?

H. Colin thou ken'st,¹² the southern shepherd's boy ;

Him Love hath wounded with a deadly dart :
 Whilom on him was all my care and joy,
 Forcing with gifts to win his wanton heart.
 But now from me his madding mind is start,
 And woos the widow's daughter of the glen ;
 So now fair Rosalind hath bred his smart ;
 So now his friend is chang'd for a fren.¹³

T. But if his ditties be so trimly dight,
 I pray thee, Hobbinol, record¹⁴ some one,
 The while our flocks do graze about in sight,
 And we close shrouded in this shade alone.

H. Contented I : then will I sing his lay
 Of fair Elisa, queen of shepherds all,
 Which once he made as by a spring he lay,
 And tun'd it unto the waters' fall.

"Ye dainty Nymphs, that in this bless'd brook
 Do bathe your breast,
 Forsake your watery bow'rs, and hither look,
 At my request.
 And eke you Virgins, that on Parnass' dwell,
 Whence floweth Helicon, the learn'd well,
 Help me to blaze
 Her worthy praise,
 Which in her sex doth all excel.

"Of fair Elisa be your silver song,
 That bless'd wight,
 The flow'r of virgins ; may she flourish long
 In princely plight !
 For she is Syrinx' daughter without spot,
 Which Pan,¹⁵ the shepherds' god, of her begot :
 So sprung her grace
 Of heav'nly race,
 No mortal blemish may her blot.

"See, where she sits upon the grassy green
 (O seemly sight !)

¹¹ Versify.

¹² Knowest.

¹³ A stranger ; otherwise "frem" or "fremd" ; German, "Fremde."

¹⁴ Call to mind, rehearse.

¹⁵ "By Pan is here meant the most famous and victorious king, her Highness's father, late of worthy memory, King Henry the Eighth."—E. A. Syrinx, therefore, must signify Anne Boleyn.

Y-clad in scarlet, like a maiden queen,
And ermines white :
Upon her head a crimson coronet,
With damask roses and daffodillies set ;
Bay leaves between,
And primroses green,
Embellish the sweet violet.

"Tell me, have ye seen her angelic face,
Like Phoebe fair ?
Her heav'nly 'haviour, her princely grace,
Can you well compare ?
The red rose medled¹ with the white y-feres,²
In either cheek depainten³ lively cheer :
Her modest eye,
Her majesty,
Where have you seen the like but there ?

"I saw Phoebus thrust out his golden head,
Upon her to gaze ;
But, when he saw how 'broad her beams did
spread,
It did him amaze.
He blush'd to see another sun below,
Nor durst again his fiery face out shew.
Let him, if he dare,
His brightness compare
With hers, to have the overthrow.

"Shew thyself, Cynthia, with thy silver rays,
And be not abaah'd :
When she the beams of her beauty displays,
O how art thou dash'd !
But I will not match her with Latona's seed ;
Such folly great sorrow to Niobé did breed.
Now she is a stone,
And makes daily moan,
Warning all other to take heed.

"Pan may be proud that ever he begot
Such a bellibone ;⁴
And Syrinx rejoice, that ever was her lot
To bear such an one.
Soon as my younglings cryen for the dam,
To her will I offer a milk-white lamb ;
She is my goddess plain,
And I her shepherd's swain,
All be forswonk and forswat I am.⁵

"I see Calliope speed her to the place
Where my goddess shines ;
And after her the other Muses trace,⁶
With their violins.
Be they not bay-branches which they do bear,
All for Elisa in her hand to wear ?
So sweetly they play,
And sing all the way,
That it a heaven is to hear.

"Lo, how finely the Graces can it foot
To the instrument :

They dancen deftly, and singen swoot,⁷
In their merriment.
Wants not a fourth Grace, to make the dance
even ?
Let that room to my Lady be given.
She shall be a Grace,
To fill the fourth place,
And reign with the rest in heaven.

"And whither runs this bevy of ladies bright,
Rang'd in a row ?
They be all Ladies of the Lake behight,⁸
That unto her go.
Chloris, that is the chieftest nymph of all,
Of olive branches bears a coronal :
Olives be for peace,
When wars do surcease :
Such for a princess be principal.

"Ye shepherds' daughters, that dwell on the
green,
Hie you there apace :
Let none come there but that virgins be'n
To adorn her grace :
And, when you come where as she is in place,
See that your rudeness do not you disgrace :
Bind your fillets fast,
And gird in your waist,
For more fineness, with a tawdry lace.⁹

"Bring hither the pink and purple columbine,
With gillyflow'rs ;
Bring coronations, and sops-in-wine,¹⁰
Worn of paramours :¹¹
Strow me the ground with daffodowndillies,
And cowslips, and kingcups, and lov'd lilies :
The pretty paunce,¹²
And the chevisance,
Shall match with the fair flow'r délice.¹³

"Now rise up, Elisa, deck'd as thou art
In royal array ;
And now ye dainty damsels may depart
Each one her way.
I fear I have troubled your troops too long ;
Let Dame Elisa thank you for her song :
And, if you come hither
When damsons I gather,
I will part them all you among."

T. And was this same song of Colin's own
making ?
Ah ! foolish boy ! that is with love y-blent ;¹⁴
Great pity is, he be in such taking,
For naught caren that be so lowly¹⁵ bent.
H. Sicker I hold him for a greater fon,¹⁶
That loves the thing he cannot purchase.¹⁷
But let us homeward, for night draweth on,
And twinkling stars the daylight hence
chase.

¹ Mingled. ² Together. ³ Picture.
⁴ "Belle et bonne"—a lovely and good maiden ;
otherwise "bonnibelie."
⁵ Although I am overtoiled and spent with heat.
⁶ Go, walk. ⁷ Sweetly. ⁸ Called.
⁹ A lace or girdle bought at the fair of Saint Eithel-
red, vulgarly called Saint Audrey.

¹⁰ "A flower in colour much like to a coronation
(carnation), but differing in smell and quantity."—*E. K.*
¹¹ Lovers. ¹² Fantasy.
¹³ Flower-de-luce, or iris ; "being in Latin," says *H. K.*,
"called *flos deliciarum*," flower of delights.
¹⁴ Blinded. ¹⁵ Foolishly.
¹⁶ Fool. ¹⁷ Obtain.

THEOT'S EMBLEM :

O quam te memorem, Virgo! (O! what shall I call thee, Virgin!)

ROBINOL'S EMBLEM :

*O Dea certe!*¹ (O! assuredly a Goddess!)

MAY.

EGLOGA QUINTA.—ARGUMENT.

In this fifth Epilogue, under the person of two shepherds, Piers and Palinode, he represented two forms of Pastors or Ministers, or the Protestant and the Catholic; whose chief talk standeth in reasoning, whether the life of the one must be like the other; with whom having showed that it is dangerous to maintain any fellowship, or give too much credit to their colourable and feigned good-will, he telleth him a tale of the Fox, that, by such a counterpoint of craftiness, deceived and deceived the credulous Kid.

Palinode. Piers.

Pal. Is not this the merry month of May,
When love-lads masken in fresh array?
How falls it, then, we no merrier be'n,
Like as others, girt in gaudy green?
Our blonket liveries² be all too sad
For this same season, when all is y-clad
With pleasance; the ground with grass, the
woods
With green leaves, the bushes with blooming
buds.

Youth's folk now flocken in ev'rywhere,
To gather May-baskets³ and smelling brere;⁴
And home they hasten the poets to dight,⁵
And all the kirk-pillars, ere daylight,
With hawthorn buds, and sweet eglantine,
And garlands of roses and sops-in-wine.
Such merry-make holy saints doth queme,⁶
But we here sitten as drown'd in dream.

Piers. For youngers, Palinode, such follies
fit,
But we two be men of elder wit.

Pal. Sicker⁷ this morrow, no longer ago,
I saw a shoal of shepherds outgo
With singing, and shouting, and jolly cheer :

¹ "This poem is taken out of Virgil, and there of him used in the person of Æneas to his mother Venus, appearing to him in likeness of one of Diana's damsels; being there most divinely set forth."—E. K.

² "Gray coats."—E. K.

³ Bunches or little bushes of hawthorn.

⁴ Brise. ⁵ To dress the May-poles.

⁶ Please. ⁷ Certain.

⁸ Went a jolly labourer or drummer. ⁹ Joyance.

¹⁰ Music. ¹¹ At the same time.

¹² Band. ¹³ Toll.

¹⁴ Folly. ¹⁵ Vagabonds.

¹⁶ "Great Pan is Christ, the very God of all shepherds, which calleth himself the great and good shepherd. The name is most rightly (methinks) applied to him; for Pan signifieth all, or omnipotent, which is only the Lord Jesus." So says E. K. and proceeds to apply to Christ Æschylus' story of the voice which cried on the sea that the great Pan was dead.

¹⁷ Somewhat.

¹⁸ Foolishly.

¹⁹ Foolish.

²⁰ "Then with them doth imitate the epitaph of the

Before them yode a lusty taberere,⁸
That to the many a horn-pipe play'd,
Whereto they dancen each one with his maid.
To see those folks make such joyance⁹
Made my heart after the pipe to dancè:
Then to the green wood they speeden them all,
To fetchen home May with their musical;¹⁰
And home they bringen in a royal throne,
Crown'd as king; and his queen at one¹¹
Was Lady Flora, on whom did attend
A fair flock of fairies, and a fresh bend¹²
Of lovely nymphs. (O that I were there,
To helpen the ladies their May-bush bear!)
Ah! Piers, be not thy teeth on edge, to think
How great sport they gainen with little swink?¹³

Piers. Pardie! so far am I from envy,
That their fondness¹⁴ inly I pity:
Those faitours¹⁵ little regarden their charge,
While they, letting their sheep run at large,
Passen their time, that should be sparely spent,
In lusthead and wanton merriment.
These same be shepherds for the devil's stead,
That playen while their flocks be unfed:
Well it is seen their sheep be not their own,
That letten them run at random alone:
But they be hir'd, for little pay,
Of other that caren as little as they
What fallen the flock, so they have the fleece,
And get all the gain, paying but a piece.
I muse, what account both these will make,—
The one for the hire, which he doth take,
And th' other for leaving his Lord's task,—
When great Pan¹⁶ account of shepherds shall
ask.

Pal. Sicker,¹⁷ now I see thou speakest of spite,
All for thou lackest somedea¹⁸ their delight.
I (as I am) had rather be envied,
All were it of my foe, than fondly¹⁹ pitied;
And yet, if need were, pitied would be,
Rather than other should scorn at me;
For pitied is mishap that n' has remedy,
But scorn'd be deeds of fond²⁰ foolery.
What shoulde shepherds other things tmd,
Than, since their God his good does them send,
Reapen the fruit thereof, that is pleasure.
The while they here liven at ease and leisure.
For, when they be dead, their good is y-go,
They sleepen in rest, well as other mo':
Then with them wends what they spent in cost,²⁰

riotous king Sardanapalus, which he owned to be written on his tomb in Greek: which verses be thus translated by Tully:

'Hæc habui quæ edi, quæque exsaturata libido
Hæsit, at illa manent multa ac præclara relicta.'
Which may thus be turned into English,

'All that I eat did I joy, and all that I greedily
gorged:

As for those many goodly matters left I for others.'
Much like the epitaph of a good old Earl of Devonshire,
which though much more wisdom bewrayeth than Sar-
danapalus, yet hath a smack of his sensual delights
and beastliness: the rhymes be these:

'Ho, ho! who lies here?
I the good Earle of Devonshire,
And Maude my wife that was ful deare:
We lived together iv. years.
That we spent, we had:
That we gave, we have:
That we left, we lost.'—E. K.

But what they left behind them is lost.
Good is no good, but if¹ it be spend;
God giveth good for none other end.

Piers. Ah! Palinode, thou art a world's child:

Who touches pitch, must needs be defil'd;
But shepherds (as Algrind² us'd to say)
Must not live alike as men of the lay.³
With them it sits⁴ to care for their heir,
Enauntre⁵ their heritage do impair:
They must provide for means of maintenance,
And to continue their wont countenance:
But shepherd must walk another way,
Such worldly souvenance⁶ he must forsay.⁷
The son of his loins why should he regard
To leave enrich'd with that he hath spar'd?
Should not thilk⁸ God, that gave him that
good,

Eke cheriah his child, if in his ways he stood?
For if he mislive in lewdness and lust,
Little boots all the wealth and the trust
That his father left by inheritance;
All will be soon wasted with misgovernance:
But through this, and other their miscreance,⁹
They maken many a wrong chevissance,¹⁰
Heaping up waves of wealth and woe,
The floods whereof shall them overflow.
Such men's folly I cannot compare
Better than to the ape's foolish care,
That is so enamour'd of her young one
(And yet, God wot, such cause had she none),
That with her hard hold, and strait embracing,
She stoppeth the breath of her youngling.
So oftentimes, when as good is meant,
Evil ensueth of wrong intent.

The time was once, and may again return
(For aught may happen, that hath been beforen),
When shepherds had none inheritance,
Nor of land, nor fee in sufferance,
But what might arise of the bare sheep
(Were it more or less) which they did keep.
Well, y-wis, was it with shepherds then:
Naught having, naught feared they to forgo;¹¹
For Pan himself was their inheritance,¹²
And little them serv'd for their maintenance.
The shepherds' God so well them guided,
That of naught they were unprovided;
Butter enough, honey, milk, and whey,
And their flocks' fleeces them to array:
But tract of time, and long prosperitey
(That nurse of vice, this of insolencey),
Lull'd the shepherds in such security,
That, not content with loyal obeisance,
Some gan to gape for greedy governance,¹³
And match themselves with mighty potentates,

¹ Unless.

² Grindal, Archbishop of Canterbury, conspicuous for his leaning to the puritanical party in the Reformed Church.

⁴ It besemes them.

⁶ Remembrance.

⁸ The same.

¹⁰ Bargain.

¹² "Pan himself; God; according as is said in Deuteronomy, that, in division of the land of Canaan, to the tribe of Levi no portion of heritage should be allotted, for God himself was their inheritance."—*E. K.*
¹³ "Meant of the Pope, and his Antichristian prelates, which usurp a tyrannical dominion in the Church, &c."—*E. K.*

³ Larky.

⁵ Lest.

⁷ Forsake.

⁹ Misbelief.

¹¹ Lose.

Lovers of lordship, and troublers of states:
Then gan shepherds' swains to look aloft,
And leave to live hard, and learn to lig¹⁴ soft:
Then, under colour of shepherds, somehow
There crept in wolves, full of fraud and guile,
That often devoured their own sheep,
And often the shepherds that did them keep:
This was the first source of shepherds' sorrow,
That now n'll¹⁵ be quit with bail nor borrow.¹⁶

Pal. Three things to bear be very burdensome,
But the fourth to forbear is outrageous:
Women, that of love's longing once lust,
Hardly forbear, but have it they must:
So when cholour is inflam'd with rage,
Wanting revenge, is hard to assuage:
And who can counsel a thirsty soul
With patience to forbear the offer'd bowl?
But of all burdens that a man can bear,
Most is a fool's talk to bear and to hear.
I ween the giant¹⁷ has not such a weight,
That bears on his shoulders the heaven's height.
Thou findest fault where n' is¹⁸ to be found,
And buildest strong work upon a weak ground:
Thou raillest on right withouten reason,
And blamest them much for small encaseon.¹⁹
How shoulden shepherds live, if not so?
What? should they pinen in pain and woe?
Nay, say I thereto, by my dear borrow,²⁰
If I may rest, I n'll²¹ live in sorrow.
Sorrow ne need to be hastened on,
For he will come, without calling, anon.
While times endure of tranquillity,
Usen we freely our felicity;
For, when approachen the stormy stours,²²
We must with our shoulders bear off the sharp
show'rs;

And, sooth to sayn, naught seemeth²³ such strife,
That shepherds so witen²⁴ each other's life,
And layen their faults the worlds beforen,
The while their foes do each of them scorn.
Let none mislike of that may not be mended;
So conteck²⁵ soon by conoord might be ended.
Piers. Shepherd, I list no accordance make
With shepherd that does the right way forsake;
And of the twain, if choice were to me,
Had lever²⁶ my foe than my friend he be;
For what concord have light and dark sam?²⁷
Or what peace has the lion with the lamb?
Such faitours,²⁸ when their false hearts be hid,
Will do as did the Fox by the Kid.²⁹

Pal. Now, Piers, of fellowship, tell us that
saying;
For the lad can keep both our flocks from stray-
ing.

¹⁴ Lie.

¹⁶ Pledge or surety.

¹⁷ Atlas.

¹⁸ None is.

¹⁹ Occasion.

²⁰ "By my Saviour," whom *E. K.* calls "the common pledge of all men's debt to death."

²¹ The assaults of storm.

²² Blame.

²³ Rather.

²⁴ Together.

²⁵ "By the Kid may be understood the simple sort of the faithful and true Christians. By his dam, Christ, that hath already with careful watchwords (as here doth the Goat) warned her little ones to beware of such doubling deceit. By the Fox, the false and faithless Papists, to whom is no credit to be given, nor fellowship to be used."—*E. K.*

²⁶ Will not.

²⁷ Il besemes.

²⁸ Il bestra.

²⁹ Il bestra.

Piers. This same Kid (as I can well devise)
Was too very foolish and unwise ;
For on a time, in summer season,
The Goat her dam, that had good reason,
Yode¹ forth abroad unto the green wood,
To browse, or play, or what she thought good :
But, for she had a motherly care
Of her young son, and wit to beware,
She set her youngling before her knee,
That was both fresh and lovely to see,
And full of favour as kid might be.
His velvet head began to shoot out,
And his wreath'd horns gan newly sprout ;
The blossoms of lust to bud did begin,
And spring forth rankly under his chin.
"My son," quoth she ; and with that gan
weep ;

For careful thoughts in her heart did creep ;
"God bless thee, poor orphan ! as he might
me,

And send thee joy of thy jollity.
Thy father" (that word she spake with pain,
For a sigh had nigh rent her heart in twain),
"Thy father, had he liv'd this day,
To see the branch of his body display,
How would he have joy'd at this sweet sight ?
But, ah ! false Fortune such joy did him spite,²
And cut off his days with untimely woe,
Betraying him into the trains³ of his foe.
Now I, a wallful widow behight,⁴
Of my old age have this one delight,
To see thee succeed in thy father's stead,
And flourish in flowers of lustihead ;
For ev'n so thy father his head upheld,
And so his haughty horns did he weld."⁵

Then, marking him with melting eyes,
A thrilling throb⁶ from her heart did arise,
And interrupted all her other speech
With some old sorrow that made a new breach ;
Seem'd she saw in her youngling's face
The old lineaments of his father's grace.
At last her sullen⁷ silence she broke,
And gan his new-budded beard to stroke.
"Kiddie," quoth she, "thou ken'st⁸ the great
care

I have of thy health and thy welfare,
Which many wild beasts licken⁹ in wait
For to entrap in thy tender state :
But most the Fox, master of collusion ;¹⁰
For he has vow'd thy last confusion.
Forthy,¹¹ my Kiddie, be rul'd by me,
And never give trust to his treachery ;
And, if he chancs come when I am abroad,
Sperr¹² the gate fast, for fear of fraud ;
Nor for all his worst, nor for his best,
Open the door at his request."

So school'd the Goat her wanton son,
That answer'd his mother, all should be done.
Then went the pensive dam out of door,

¹ Went.

² Begrudge.

³ Called.

⁴ A piercing sigh.

⁵ Knowest.

⁶ Therefore.

⁷ Recognised.

⁸ "By such trifles are noted the relics and rags of
Popish superstition, which put no small religion in

⁹ Snares.

¹⁰ Wild, bear.

¹¹ Mournful.

¹² Gulls.

¹³ Bar, shut.

¹⁴ Bundle.

And chanc'd to stumble at the threshold floor ;
Her stumbling step somewhat her amard
(For such, as signs of ill luck, be disprais'd) ;
Yet forth she yode,¹ thereat half aghast ;
And Kiddie the door sperr'd after her fast.
It was not long after she was gone,
But the false Fox came to the door anon ;
Not as a fox, for then he had been kenn'd,¹²
But all as a poor pedlar he did wend,
Bearing a truss¹⁴ of trifles at his back,
As bells, and babes, and glasses, in his pack :¹³
A biggen¹⁵ he had got about his brain,
For in his headpieces he felt a sore pain :
His hinder heel was wrapt in a clout,
For with great cold he had got the gout :
There at the door he cast me down his pack,
And laid him down, and groan'd, "Alack !
alack !

Ah ! dear Lord ! and sweet Saint Charity !
That some good body would once pity me !"
Well heard Kiddie all this sore constraint,
And long'd to know the cause of his complaint ;
Then, creeping close behind the wicket's clink,¹⁷
Privily he peep'd out through a chink,
Yet not so privily but the Fox him spied ;
For deceitful meaning is double-eyed.
"Ah ! good young master" (then gan he cry),
"Jesus bless that sweet face I espy,
And keep your corse from the careful sounds¹⁸
That in my carrion carcase abounds."

The Kid, pitying his heaviness,
Ask'd the cause of his great distress,
And also who and whence that he were.
Then he, that had well y-oun'd¹⁹ his lear,¹⁹
Thus medled²⁰ his talk with many a tear :
"Sick, sick, alas ! and little lack of dead,²¹
But I be reliev'd by your beastlihead.²²
I am a poor sheep, all be my colour dun,
For with long travel I am burnt in the sun ;
And if that my grandsire me said be true,
Sicker I am very sib²³ to you ;
So be your goodlihead do not disdain
The base kindred of so simple swain.
Of mercy and favour then I you pray,
With your aid to forestall my near decay."²⁴

Then out of his pack a glass he took,
Wherein while Kiddie unware did look,
He was so enamour'd with the newell,²⁵
That naught he deem'd dear for the jewel :
Then open'd he the door, and in came
The false Fox, as he were stark lame ;
His tail he clapp'd betwixt his legs twain,
Lest he should be descried by his train.

Being within, the Kid made him good glee,²⁶
All for the love of the glass he did see.
After his cheer, the pedlar gan chat,
And tell many leasings²⁷ of this and that,
And how he could show many a fine knack ;²⁸
Then show'd his ware and open'd his pack,

bells, and babies or idols, and glasses or paxes, and
such like trumperies."—E. K.

¹⁷ The key-hole.

¹⁸ Sorrowful pang.

¹⁹ Conned, learned, his lesson.

²⁰ Little short of being dead.

²¹ By your beastship.

²² To prevent my approaching destruction.

²³ Novelty.

²⁴ Lies.

²⁵ Cap.

²⁶ Mingled.

²⁷ Closely related.

²⁸ Gladly entertained him.

²⁹ Toy, nick-nack.

I saw Calliope, with Muses mo',
Soon as thy oaten pipe began to sound,
Their ivory lutes and tambourines forego,
And from the fountain, where they sat around,
Run after hastily thy silver sound;
But, when they came where thou thy skill didst
show,

They drew aback, as half with shame confound
Shepherd to see them in their art outgo.

C. Of Muses, Hobbinol, I son no skill,
For they be daughters of the highest Jove,
And holden scorn of homely shepherd's quill;
For since I heard that Pan with Phoebus strove,
Which him to much rebuke and danger drove,
I never list presume to Parnass' hill;
But, piping low in shade of lowly grove,
I play to please myself, albeit ill.

Naught weigh¹ I who my song doth praise or
blame,

Nor strive to win renown or pass the rest:
With shepherd sits not² follow flying Fame,
But feed his flock in fields where falls them best.
I wot my rhymes be rough, and rudely drest;
The fitter they my careful case³ to frame:
Enough is me to paint out my unrest,
And pour my piteous complaints out in the same.

The god of shepherds, Tityrus, is dead,
Who taught me homely, as I can, to make:⁴
He, whilst he liv'd, was the sov'reign head
Of shepherds all that be with love y-take;⁵
Well could he wail his woes, and lightly slake
The flames which love within his heart had bred,
And tell us merry tales to keep us wake,
The while our sheep about us safely fed.

Now dead he is, and lieth wrapt in lead
(O! why should Death on him such outrage
show?)

And all his passing skill with him is fled,
The fame whereof doth daily greater grow.
But, if on me some little drops would flow
Of that the spring was in his learned head,
I soon would learn these woods to wail my woe,
And teach the trees their trickling tears to shed.

Then should my complaints, caus'd of discourtesy,
As messengers of this my painful⁶ plight,
Fly to my love, wherever that she be,
And pierce her heart with point of worthy wite,⁷
As she deserves that wrought so deadly spite.
And thou, Menalcas! that by treachery
Didst underfong⁸ my lass to wax so light,
Shouldst well be known for such thy villainy.

But since I am not as I wish I were,
Ye gentle shepherds! which your flocks do feed,
Whether on hills, or dales, or elsewhere,
Bear witness all of this so wicked deed;
And tell the lass, whose flower is wox a weed,

1 Care.

2 Unhappy condition.

3 To make poetry.

4 Lamentable.

5 Seduce; "undermine and deceive by false sugges-

tions."—E. K.

6 Borrowful.

7 Retard.

8 Morrell—though E. K. gives no authority for the

3 It befits not (to).

5 Overtaken.

7 Merited blame.

8 Pitiable.

10 Go.

And faultless faith is turn'd to faithless fear,
That she the truest shepherd's heart made bleed
That lives on earth, and lov'd her most dear.

H. O careful⁹ Colin! I lament thy case;
Thy tears would make the hardest flint to flow!
Ah! faithless Rosalind, and void of grace,
That art the root of all this ruthful¹⁰ woe!
But now is time, I guess, homeward to go:
Then rise, ye bless'd flocks! and home apace,
Least night with stealing steps do you foralow,¹¹
And wet your tender lambs that by you trace.¹²

COLIN'S EMBLEM:

Gia speme spenta. (Now hope is extinct.)

JULY.

ÆGLOGA SEPTIMA.—ARGUMENT.

This Æglogue is made in the honour and commendation of good shepherds, and to the shame and dispraise of proud and ambitious pastors: such as Morrell is here imagined to be.

*Thomalin. Morrell.*¹³

T. Is not this same a goatherd proud,
That sits on yonder bank,
Whose straying herd themselves do shroud
Among the bushes rank?
M. What, ho! thou jolly shepherd's swain,
Come up the hill to me;
Better is than the lowly plain,
Als'¹⁴ for thy flock and thee.
T. Ah! God shield,¹⁵ man, that I should climb,
And learn to look aloft;
This reed¹⁶ is rife,¹⁷ that oftentimes
Great climbers fall unsoff.
In humble dales is footing fast,
The trode¹⁸ is not so tickle,¹⁹
And though one fall through heedless haste,
Yet is his miss not mickle.
And now the Sun hath reard²⁰ up
His fiery-footed team,
Making his way between the Cup
And golden Diademe;
The rampant Lion²¹ hunts he fast
With Dogs of noisome breath,
Whose baleful barking brings in haste
Pain, plague, and dreary death.
Against his cruel scorching heat
Where hast thou coverture?
The wasteful hills unto his threat
Is a plain overture:²²
But, if thee list to holden chat
With seely²³ shepherd swain,

supposition—is understood to be the Bishop of London, Elmer or Aylmer, a prominent upholder of the High Church party, as Grindal was of the Low.

¹⁴ Both. ¹⁵ God forbid.

¹⁶ Saying, proverb.

¹⁷ Frequent, familiar.

¹⁸ Footing, path.

¹⁹ Uncertain.

²⁰ The sun enters Leo in July; at which time the sultry influences of the Dogstar are at their height.

²¹ Lie fully open.

²² Simple.

The brethren Twelve, that kept y-fero¹
 The flocks of mighty Pan.
 But nothing such that shepherd was
 Whom Ida hill did bear,²
 That left his flock to fetch a lass,
 Whose love he bought too dear.
 For he was proud, that ill was paid³
 (No such must shepherds be !)
 And with lewd lust was overlaid :
 Two things do ill agree.
 But shepherd must be meek and mild,
 Well ey'd, as Argus was,⁴
 With fleshly follies undefiled,
 And stout as steed of brass.
 Such one (said Algrind) Moses was,
 That saw his Maker's face,
 His face, more clear than crystal glass,
 And spake to him in place.
 This had a brother⁵ (his name I knew),
 The first of all his cote,⁶
 A shepherd true, yet not so true⁷
 As he that erst I hote.⁸
 Whilom all these were low and lief,⁹
 And lov'd their flocks to feed ;
 They never stroven to be chief,
 And simple was their weed :¹⁰
 But now (thank'd be God therefor !)
 The world is well amend,
 Their weeds be not so nightly¹¹ wore ;
 Such simple might them shend !¹²
 They be y-clad in purple and pall,¹³
 So hath their God them blist ;
 They reign and ruler over all,
 And lord it as they list ;
 Y-girl with belts of glittering gold
 (Might they good shepherds be'n !)
 Their Pan¹⁴ their sheep to them has sold ;
 I say as some have seen.
 For Palinode (if thou him ken)
 Yode¹⁵ late on pilgrimage
 To Rome (if such be Rome), and then
 He saw this misusage ;
 For shepherds (said he) there do lead
 As lords do elsewhere ;
 Their sheep have crusts, and they the bread ;
 The chips,¹⁶ and they the cheer :
 They have the fleece, and eke the flesh -
 (O seely¹⁷ sheep the while !)
 The corn is theirs, let others thresh,
 Their hands they may not file.¹⁸
 They have great store and thrifty stocks,
 Great friends and feeble foes ;
 What need them caren for their flocks,
 Their boys can look to those.
 These wizards¹⁹ walter in wealth's waves,
 Pamper'd in pleasures deep ;

They have fat kerna,²⁰ and leany knaves,²¹
 Their fasting flocks to keep.
 Such mister men²² be all misgone,²³
 They heafen hills of wrath ;
 Such surly shepherds have we none,
 They keepen all the path.
 M. Here is a great deal of good matter
 Lost for lack of telling ;
 Now sicker I see thou dost but clatter ;
 Harm may come of melling.²⁴
 Thou meddlest more than shall have thank,
 To witen²⁵ shepherds' wealth ;
 When folk be fat, and riches rank,
 It is a sign of health.
 But say me, what is Algrind, he
 That is so oft benempt ?²⁶
 T. He is a shepherd great in gree,²⁷
 But hath been long y-pent :²⁸
 One day he sat upon a hill,
 As now thou wouldst me ;
 But I am taught, by Algrind's ill,
 To love the low degree ;
 For, sitting so with bar'd scalp,
 An eagle soar'd high,
 That, weening his white head was chalk,
 A shell-fish down let fly ;
 She ween'd the shell-fish to have broke,
 But therewith bruise'd his brain ;
 So now, astonied²⁹ with the stroke,
 He lies in lingering pain.
 M. Ah ! good Algrind ! his hap was ill,
 But shall be better in time.
 Now farewell ! shepherd, since this hill
 Thou hast such doubt to climb.

THOMALIN'S EMBLEM :

In medio virtus. (Virtue dwells in the middle place.)

MORRELL'S EMBLEM :

In summo felicitas. (Happiness in the highest.)

AUGUST.

ÆGLOGA OCTAVA.—ARGUMENT.

In this Ælogue is set forth a delectable controversy, made in imitation of that in Theocritus : whereunto also Virgil fashioned his third and seventh Ælogue. They choose, for umpire of their strife, Cuddie, a weaver's boy ; who, having ended their cause, reciteth also himself a proper song, whereof Colin, the satirist, was author.

Willie. Perigot. Cuddie.

W. Tell me, Perigot, what shall be the game
 Wherefor with mine thou darest thymusic match ?

¹ Together. ² Paris. ³ Discontented.
⁴ Vigilant, like the hundred-eyed Argus.
⁵ Aaron. ⁶ Sheepfold.
⁷ For, while Moses was absent on Sinai, he led the people of Israel in their worship of the golden calf.
⁸ That I mentioned before. ⁹ Beloved.
¹⁰ Dress. ¹¹ Not nearly so much worn. ¹² Disgrace.
¹³ "Spoken of the Popes and Cardinals, which use such tyrannical colours and pompous painting."—E. K.
¹⁴ "The Pope, whom they count their God and greatest shepherd."—E. K.
¹⁵ Went. ¹⁶ Fragments.

¹⁷ Simple. ¹⁸ Defile, soil.
¹⁹ Learned men. ²⁰ Farmers.
²¹ Servants. ²² Kind of men.
²³ Gone astray. ²⁴ Meddling.
²⁵ Censure. ²⁶ Named.
²⁷ Degree, rank.
²⁸ Confined. In 1578, Archbishop Grindal was, by an order of the Star Chamber, confined to his house and suspended from his duty for six months, because he had written a letter to the Queen in advocacy of his Low Church views.
²⁹ Stunned.

P. So learn'd I love on a holy eve,
 W. Hey, ho, holyday !
 P. That ever since my heart did grieve ;
 W. Now endeth our roundelay.
 C. Sicker, such a roundel never heard I none ;
 Little lacketh Perigot of the best,
 And Willie is not greatly overgone,¹
 So weren his undersongs well addrest.
 W. Herdgroom, I fear me thou have a squint
 eye ;
 Aread² uprightly who has the victory.
 C. Faith of my soul, I deem each have gain'd ;
 Forthy³ let the lamb be Willie his own ;
 And, for Perigot so well hath him pain'd,⁴
 To him be the wroughten mazer alone.
 P. Perigot is well pleas'd with the doom,⁵
 Nor can Willie wite⁶ the witless⁷ herdgroom.
 W. Never deem'd more right of beauty, I ween,
 The shepherd of Ida,⁸ that judg'd Beauty's
 queen.
 C. But tell me, shepherds, should it not y-
 shend⁹ ?
 Your roundels fresh, to hear a doleful verse
 Of Rosalind (who knows not Rosalind ?)
 That Colin made¹⁰ ? ilk¹¹ can I you rehearse.
 P. Now say it, Cuddie, as thou art a lad ;
 With merry thing it's good to medle¹² sad.
 W. Faith of my soul, thou shalt y-crown'd be
 In Colin's stead, if thou this song aread ;¹³
 For never thing on earth so pleaseth me
 As him to hear, or matter of his deed.¹⁴
 C. Then listen each unto my heavy lay,
 And tune your pipes as ruthful as ye may :

"Ye wasteful Woods! bear witness of my
 woe,

Wherein my plaints did oftentimes resound ;
 Ye careless Birds are privy to my cries,
 Which in your songs were wont to make a part:
 Thou, pleasant Spring, hast lull'd me oft asleep,
 Whose streams my trickling tears did oft aug-
 ment!

"Resort of people doth my griefs augment ;
 The wall'd towns do work my greater woe ;
 The forest wide is fitter to resound
 The hollow echo of my careful cries:
 I hate the house, since thence my love did
 part,
 Whose wailful want debars mine eyes of sleep.

"Let streams of tears supply the place of sleep ;
 Let all, that sweet is, void ;¹⁵ and all, that may
 augment

My dole,¹⁶ draw near! More meet to wail my
 woe

Be the wild woods, my sorrows to resound,
 Than bed, or bew'r, both which I fill with
 cries

When I them see so waste, and find no part

"Of pleasure past. Here will I dwell apart
 In ghastful¹⁷ grove therefore, till my last sleep
 Do close mine eyes ; so shall I not augment,
 With sight of such as change, my restless woe.
 Help me, ye baneful Birds! whose shrieking
 sound

Is sign of dreary death, my deadly cries

"Most ruthfully to tune : and as my cries
 (Which of my woe cannot bewray least part)
 You hear all night, when Nature craveth sleep,
 Increase, so let your irksome yells augment.
 Thus all the nights in plaints, the day in woe,
 I vow'd have to waste, till safe and sound

"She home return, whose voice's silver sound
 To cheerful songs can change my cheerless cries.
 Hence with the Nightingale will I take part,
 That blessed bird, that spends her time of sleep
 In songs and plaintive pleas, the more t' augment
 The memory of his misdeed that bred her woe.¹⁷

"And you that feel no woe,

When as the sound

Of these my nightly cries

Ye hear apart,

Let break your sounder sleep,

And pity augment."

P. O Colin, Colin! the shepherds' joy.

How I admire each turning of thy verse ;

And Cuddie, fresh Cuddie, the lifeest¹⁸ boy,

How dolefully his dole thou didst rehearse !

C. Then blow your pipes, shepherds, till you be
 at home ;

The night nigheth fast, it's time to be gone.

PERIGOT HIS EMBLEM :

Vincenti gloria victi. (To the conqueror be-
 longs the glory of the conquered.)

WILLIE'S EMBLEM :

Vinto non vito. (Conquered, not overcome.)

CUDDIE'S EMBLEM :

Felice chi puo. (He is happy who can.¹⁹)

SEPTEMBER.

ÆGLOGA NONA.—ARGUMENT.

Herein Diggon Davie is devised to be a shepherd that,
 in hope of more gain, drove his sheep into a far
 country. . The abuses whereof, and loose living of
 Popish prelates, by occasion of Hobbinol's demand,
 he discourseth at large.

Hobbinol. Diggon Davie.

H. DIGGON DAVIE! I bid her good-day ;
 Or²⁰ Diggon her is, or I missey.

¹⁹ "The meaning [of these emblems] is very am-
 biguous: for Perigot by his poesy claiming the con-
 quest, and Willie not yielding, Cuddie, the arbiter of
 their cause and patron of his own, seemeth to challenge
 it as his due, saying, that he is happy which can ; so
 abruptly ending: but he meaneth either him, that can
 win the best, or moderate himself being best, and leave
 off with the best."—*E. K.*

²⁰ Either.

¹ Surpassed.

² Therefore.

³ Judgment.

⁴ Blameless.

⁵ Disparage.

⁶ Mingle.

⁷ Doing.

⁸ Sorrow.

¹⁷ See note 5, page 252.

⁹ Tell.

¹⁰ Striven.

¹¹ Blame.

¹² Paris.

¹³ The same.

¹⁴ Repeat.

¹⁵ Depart.

¹⁶ Dreary.

¹⁷ Dearest.

D. Her was her, while it was daylight,
But now her is a most wretched wight:
For day, that was, is wightly ¹ past,
And now at erst ² the dark night doth haste.

H. Diggon, aread ³ who has thee so dight; ⁴
Never I wist thee in so poor a plight.
Where is the fair flock thou wast wont to lead?
Or be they chaffer'd, ⁵ or at mischief dead? ⁶

D. Ah! for love of that is to thee most lief, ⁷
Hobbinol, I pray thee gall not my old grief;
Such question rippeth up cause of new woe,
For one, open'd, might unfold many mo'.

H. Nay, but sorrow close shrouded in heart,
I know, to keep is a burdenous smart:
Each thing imparted is more eath ⁸ to bear:
When the rain is fallen, the clouds waxen clear.
And now, sithens ⁹ I saw thy head last,
Thrice three moons be fully spent and past;
Since when thou hast measured much ground,
And wander'd, I ween, about the world round,
So as thou can many things relate;
But tell me first of thy flock's estate.

D. My sheep be wasted (woe is me therefor!)
The jolly shepherd that was of yore
Is now nor jolly, nor shepherd more.
In foreign coasts men said was plenty;
And so there is, but all of misery:
I deem'd there much to have ek'd ¹⁰ my store,
But such eking hath made my heart sore.
In those countries, where as I have been,
No being for those that truly mean;
But for such as of guile maken gain,
No such country as there to remain;
They setten to sale their shops of shame,
And maken a mart of their good name:
The shepherds there robben one another,
And layen baits to beguile their brother;
Or they will buy his sheep out of the oote,
Or they will carven ¹¹ the shepherd's throat.
The shepherd's swain you cannot well ken, ¹²
But ¹³ it be by his pride, from other men;
They looken big as bulls that be bate, ¹⁴
And bearen the crag ¹⁵ so stiff and so state, ¹⁶
As cook on his dunghill crowing crank. ¹⁷

H. Diggon, I am so stiff and so stank, ¹⁸
That unneath ¹⁹ may I stand any more;
And now the western wind bloweth sore,
That now is in his chief sovereignty,
Beating the wither'd leaf from the tree;
Sit we down here under the hill;
Then may we talk and tellen our fill,
And make a mock at the blustering blast:
Now say on, Diggon, whatever thou hast.

D. Hobbin, ah Hobbin! I curse the stound ²⁰
That ever I cast to have lorn ²¹ this ground:

¹ Quickly, suddenly.

² At once.

³ Treated.

⁴ Or dead by mischance.

⁵ Since.

⁶ Out.

⁷ Unless.

⁸ Neck.

⁹ Vigorously, merrily.

¹⁰ Scarcely.

¹¹ Left.

¹² Unknown.

¹³ The same.

¹⁴ Explain, relate.

¹⁵ Sold.

¹⁶ Dear.

¹⁷ Easy.

¹⁸ Increased.

¹⁹ Recognise.

²⁰ Baited, well-fed.

²¹ Stoutly.

²² Weary.

²³ German, "Stunde."

²⁴ Foolish.

²⁵ Although.

²⁶ Fool.

Well-away the while I was so fond ²⁷
To leave the good, that I had in hand,
In hope of better that was uncouth! ²⁸
So lost the dog the flesh in his mouth.
My silly sheep (ah! silly sheep!)

That hereby there I whilom us'd to keep,
All ²⁹ were they lusty as thou didst see,
Be all starv'd with pine and penury;
Hardly myself escap'd thilk ³⁰ pain,
Driven for need to come home again.

H. Ah, fon! ³¹ now by thy loss art taught
That seldom change the better brought:
Content who lives with tri'd state,
Need fear no change of frowning Fate;
But who will seek for unknown gain,
Oft lives by loss, and leaves with pain.

D. I wot not, Hobbin, how I was bewitch'd
With vain desire and hope to be enrich'd:
But, sicker, so it is, as the bright star
Seemeth ay greater when it is far:
I thought the soil would have made me rich,
But now I wot it is nothing sich; ³²
For either the shepherds be idle and still,
And led of their sheep what way they will,
Or they be false, and full of coovetise,
And casten to compass many wrong emprise:
But the more be fraught with fraud and spite,
Nor in good nor goodness taken delight,
But kindle coals of conteck ³³ and ire,
Wherewith they set all the world on fire;
Which when they thinken again to quench,
With holy water they do them all drench.
They say they con ³⁴ to heav'n the highway,
But by my soul I dare undersay ³⁵
They never set foot in that same trode, ³⁶
But balk ³⁷ the right way, and strayen abroad.
They boast they have the devil at command,
But ask them therefor what they have pawn'd:
Marry! that great Pan bought with dear borrow, ³⁸
To quit ³⁹ it from the black bower of sorrow. ⁴⁰
But they have sold that same long ago;
Forthy ⁴¹ woulde draw with them many mo'.
But let them gang ⁴² alone a God's name;
As they have brew'd, so let them bear blame.

H. Diggon, I pray thee speak not so dirk; ⁴³
Such mister saying ⁴⁴ me seemeth too mirk. ⁴⁵

D. Then, plainly to speak of shepherds most-
what, ⁴⁶

Bad is the best (this English is flat);
Their ill 'haviour gars ⁴⁷ men missey ⁴⁸
Both of their doctrine and their fay. ⁴⁹
They say the world is much warre ⁵⁰ than it wont,
All for her shepherds be beastly and blunt. ⁵¹
Other say, but how truly I n'ot, ⁵²
All for they holden shame of their oote:

²⁷ Nothing of the kind.

²⁸ Know.

²⁹ Path.

³⁰ That which Christ, redeemed with great pledge
i.e., their souls.

³¹ Deliver.

³² Therefore.

³³ Darkly.

³⁴ Obscure.

³⁵ Makes, causes.

³⁶ Faith.

³⁷ Unpolished, uneducated.

³⁸ Know not.

³⁹ Strife.

⁴⁰ Say in contradiction.

⁴¹ Swerve from.

⁴² From Hell.

⁴³ Go.

⁴⁴ Such kind of speech.

⁴⁵ Generally.

⁴⁶ Say evil.

⁴⁷ Worse; Scottish, "waur."

Some stick not to say (hot coal on their tongue!)
 That such mischief grazeth them among,
 All for they casten too much of world's care,
 To deck their dame, and enrich their heir;
 For such enchainson,¹ if you go nigh,
 Few chimneys reeking you shall espy.
 The fat ox, that wont lig² in the stall,
 Is now fast stall'd in their crumenall.³
 Thus chatten the people in their steads,
 Alike as a monster of many heads:
 But they, that shooten nearest the prick,⁴
 Say, others the fat from their beards do lick:
 For big bulls of Bashan brace⁵ them about,
 That with their horns batten the more stout,
 But the lean souls treaden under foot;
 And to seek redress might little boot;⁶
 For liker be they to pluck away more,
 Than aught of the gotten good to restore:
 For they be like foul quagmires overgrasse'd,⁷
 That, if thy galage⁸ once sticketh fast,
 The more to wind it out thou dost swink,⁹
 Thou must ay deeper and deeper sink.
 Yet better leave off with a little loss,
 Than by much wrestling to lose the gross.¹⁰

H. Now, Diggon, I see thou speakest too plain;

Better it were a little to feign,
 And cleanly cover that cannot be cur'd;
 Such ill, as is for'd, must needs be endur'd.
 But of such pastors how do the flocks creep?

D. Such as the shepherds, such be their sheep,
 For they n' ill¹¹ listen to the shepherd's voice
 But if he call them at their good choice;
 They wander at will and stay at pleasure,
 And to their folds go at their own leisure.
 But they had be better come at their call;
 For many have into mischief fall,
 And been of ravenous wolves y-rent,
 All for they n' ould¹² be buxom and bent.¹³

H. Fie on thee, Diggon, and all thy foul leasing!¹⁴

Well is known that, since the Saxon king,¹⁵
 Never was wolf seen, many nor some,
 Nor in all Kent, nor in Christendom;
 But the fewer wolves (the sooth to sayn)
 The more be the foxes that here remain.

D. Yes, but they gang¹⁶ in more secret wise,
 And with sheeps' clothing do them disguise.
 They walk not widely as they were wont,
 For fear of rangers and the great hunt,¹⁷
 But privily prowling to and fro,
 Enauntre¹⁸ they might be inly know.

H. Or privy or pert¹⁹ if any bin,²⁰
 We have great bandogs will tear their skin.

D. Indeed thy Ball is a bold big cur,
 And could make a jolly hole in their fur:
 But not good dogs them needeth to chase,
 But heedly shepherds to discern their face;

For all their craft is in their countenance,
 They be so grave and full of maintenance.²¹
 But shall I tell thee what myself know
 Chanced to Roffin not long ago?

H. Say it out, Diggon, whatever it hight,²²
 For naught but well might him betight:²³
 He is so meek, wise, and merciable,²⁴
 And with his word his work is convenable.²⁵
 Colin Clout, I ween, be his self²⁶ boy
 (Ah, for Colin! he whilom my joy):
 Shepherds such God might us many send,
 That doen so carefully their flocks tend!

D. This same shepherd might I well mark,
 He has a dog to bite or to bark;
 Never had shepherd so keen a cur,
 That waketh and if but a leaf stir.
 Whilom there wonn'd²⁷ a wicked wolf,
 That with many a lamb had glutted his gulf,
 And ever at night wont to repair
 Unto the flock, when the welkin shone fair,
 Y-clad in clothing of silly sheep,
 When the good old man us'd to sleep;
 Then at midnight he would bark and bawl
 (For he had eft²⁸ learn'd a curr's call),
 As if a wolf were among the sheep:
 With that the shepherd would break his sleep,
 And send out Lowder (for so his dog hote²⁹)
 To range the fields with wide open throat.
 Then, when as Lowder was far away,
 This wolfish sheep would catchen his prey,
 A lamb, or a kid, or a weanell wast;³⁰
 With that to the wood would he speed him fast.
 Long time he us'd this slippery prank,
 Ere Roffy could for his labour him thank.
 At end, the shepherd his practice spied
 (For Roffy is wise, and as Argus ey'd),
 And, when at even he came to the flock,
 Fast in their folds he did them lock,
 And took out the wolf in his counterfeit coat,
 And let out the sheep's blood at his throat.

H. Marry, Diggon, what should him affray
 To take his own wherever it lay?
 For, had his weasand been a little wider,
 He would have devour'd both hiddier and shidder.³¹

D. Mischief light on him, and God's great curse!

Too good for him had been a great deal worse;
 For it was a perilous beast above all,
 And eke had he conn'd³² the shepherd's call,
 And oft in the night came to the sheep-cote,
 And call'd Lowder, with a hollow throat,
 As if it the old man's self had been:
 The dog his master's voice did it ween,
 Yet half in doubt he open'd the door,
 And ran out as he was wont of yore.
 No sooner was out, but, swifter than thought,
 Fast by the hide the wolf Lowder caught;

1 Occasion.
 2 Purs; Latin "crumena."
 3 Compass, embrace.
 4 Mark.
 5 Overgrown with grass.
 6 Avail.
 7 Labour.
 8 Shoe.
 9 Yielding and obedient.
 10 Would not.
 11 King Edgar, during whose reign (957-975) all the wolves are said to have been destroyed in England, through the payment of money rewards for their heads.
 12 Lie.
 13 Falsehood.
 14 Quickly.
 15 Weaned youngling.
 16 Male and female; him and her.

16 Go.
 17 "Executing of laws and justice."—E. K.
 18 Lest.
 19 Secret or open.
 20 Be.
 21 Behaviour.
 22 Betide.
 23 Conformable.
 24 Dwelt.
 25 Was called.
 26 Learned.

And, when the stubborn stroke of stronger
stounds¹

Has somewhat slack'd the tenor of thy string,
Of love and lustihead then may'st thou sing,
And carol loud, and lead the Miller's round,²
All³ were Elisa one of that same ring;
So might our Cuddie's name to heav'n sound.

O. Indeed the Romiah Tityrus,⁴ I hear,
Through his Mæcenas left his oaten reed,
Whereon he erst had taught his flocks to feed,
And labour'd lands to yield the timely ear,
And oft⁵ did sing of wars and deadly dread,
So as the heav'n's did quake his verse to hear.

But ah! Mæcenas is y-clad in clay,
And great Augustus long ago is dead,
And all the worthies ligg'n⁶ wrapt in lead
That matter made for poets on to play:
For ever, who in derring-do⁷ were dead,
The lofty verse of them was lov'd ay.)

But after Virtue gan for age to stoop,
And mighty Manhood brought a bed of ease,
The vaunting poets found naught worth a pease
To put in press among the learn'd troop;⁸
Then gan the streams of flowing wits to cease,
And sunbright honour penn'd in shameful coop.

And if that any buds of Poesy,
Yet, of the old stock, gan to shoot again,
Or it men's follies must be for'd to feign,
And roll with rest in rhymes of ribaldry;
Or, as it sprung, it wither must again:
Tom Piper makes us better melody.

P. O peerless Poesy! where is then thy place?
If nor in prince's palace thou dost sit
(And yet is prince's palace the most fit),
Nor breast of baser birth doth thee embrace,
Then make thee wings of thine aspiring wit,
And, whence thou cam'st, fly back to heav'n's
apace.

O. Ah! Peroy, it is all too weak and wan
So high to soar, and make so large a flight;
Her piec'd⁹ pinions be not so in plight:
For Colin fits such famous flight to scan;
He, were he not with love so ill bedight,¹⁰
Would mount as high and sing as sweet as swan.

P. Ah! for¹¹ for Love does teach him climb
so high,
And lifts him up out of the loathsome mire;
Such immortal mirror, as he doth admire,
Would raise one's mind above the starry sky,
And cause a caitiff courage¹² to aspire;
For lofty love doth loathe a lowly eye.

O. All otherwise the state of Poet stands;
For lordly Love is such a tyrant fell,
That, where he rules, all pow'r he doth expel;
The vaunted verse a vacant head demands,

Nor wont with crabbed Care the Muses dwell:
Unwisely weaves, that takes two webs in hand.

Who ever casts to compass weighty prize,
And thinks to throw out thundering words of
threat,
Let pour in lavish cups and thrifty bits of meat,
For Bacchus' fruit is friend to Phœbus wise;
And, when with wine the brain begins to sweat,
The numbers flow as fast as spring doth rise.

Thou ken'st¹³ not, Percie, how the rhyme should
rage;

O if my temples were distain'd with wine,
And girl in garlands of wild ivy twine,
How I could rear the Muse on stately stage,
And teach her tread aloft in buskin fine,
With quaint¹⁴ Bellona in her equipage!

But ah! my courage cools ere it be warm:
Forthy¹⁵ content us in this humble shade,
Where no such troublous tides¹⁶ have us amay'd;
Here we our slender pipes may safely charm.¹⁷

P. And, when my goats shall have their
bellies laid,
Cuddie shall have a kid to store his farm.

CUDDIE'S EMBLEM:

*Agriante calcecinus illo, &c.*¹⁸

NOVEMBER.

ÆGLOGA UNDECIMA.—ARGUMENT.

*In this eleventh Æglogue he bewaileth the death of some
maiden of great blood, whom he calleth Dido. The
personage is secret, and to me altogether unknown,
albeit of himself I often required the same. This
Æglogue is made in imitation of Marot his song,
which he made upon the death of Loyes the French
Queen; but far passing his reach, and in mine
opinion all other the Æglogues of this Book.*

Thenot. Colin.

T. COLIN, my dear, when shall it please thee
sing,

As thou wert wont, songs of some joviance?¹⁹
Thy Muse too long alumb'reth in sorrowing,
Lull'd asleep through Love's misgovernance.
Now somewhat sing whose endless souvenances²⁰
Among the shepherds' swains may ay remain,
Whether thee list thy lov'd lass advance,
Or honour Pan with hymns of higher vein.

C. Thenot, now n'is²¹ the time of merry-make,
Nor Pan to hery,²² nor with Love to play;
Such mirth in May is meekest for to make,
Or summer shade, under the cock'd hay.
But now sad winter welk'd²³ hath the day,
And Phœbus, weary of his yearly task,

¹ Efforts.

² Although.

³ Soon afterwards.

⁴ Lie.

⁵ The poets found no deeds worthy to be advanced

or celebrated by the Muses.

⁶ Restead.

⁷ Fool.

⁸ Knowest.

⁹ Strange.

¹⁰ Therefore.

¹¹ A kind of dance.

¹² Virgil.

¹³ Daring deeds.

¹⁴ Imperfect.

¹⁵ A base mind.

¹⁶ Is not.

¹⁷ Shortened.

¹⁸ Times, seasons.

¹⁹ Attune.

²⁰ Hereby is meant, as also in the whole course of
this Æglogue, that Poetry is a divine instinct, and un-
natural rage, passing the reach of common reason.—
E. K.

²¹ Joyousness.

²² Memory.

²³ Celebrate.

Where be the nosegays that she dight¹ for thee?
The colour'd chapetales wrought with a chief;²
The knotted rush-rings, and gilt rosemary?
For she deem'd no thing too dear for thee.

Ah! they be all y-clad in clay;

One bitter blast blew all away.

O heavy herse!

Thereof naught remains but the memory;

O careful verse!

"Ah me! that dreary Death should strike so
mortal stroke,

That can undo Dame Nature's kindly course;

The faded locks³ fall from the lofty oak,

The floods do gasp, for dried is their source,

And floods of tears flow in their stead perforce:

The mantled meadows mourn,

Their sundry colours turn.

O heavy herse!

The heav'ns do melt in tears without remorse;

O careful verse!

"The feeble flocks in field refuse their former
food,

And hang their heads as they would learn to
weep;

The beasts in forest wail as they were wood;⁴

Except the wolves, that chase the wand'ring
sheep,

Now she is gone that safely did them keep:

The turtle on the bard's branch

Laments the wound that Death did launch.

O heavy herse!

And Philomel her song with tears doth steep;

O careful verse!

"The water nymphs, that went with her to
sing and dance,

And for her garland olive branches bear,

Now baleful boughs of cypress do advance;

The Muses, that were wont green bays to wear,

Now bringen bitter elder-branches sear;

The Fatal Sisters eke repent

Her vital thread so soon was spent.

O heavy herse!

Mourn now, my Muse, now mourn with heavy
cheer;

O careful verse!

"O trustless state of earthly things, and
slipper⁵ hope

Of mortal men, that swink⁶ and sweat for
naught,

And, shooting wide, do miss the mark'd scope;

Now have I learn'd (a lesson dearly bought)

That n['] is⁷ on earth assurance to be sought;

For what might be in earthly mould,

That did her buried body hold.

O heavy herse!

Yet saw I on the bier when it was brought

O careful verse!

"But maugré⁸ Death, and dreaded Sisters'
deadly spite,

And gates of Hell, and fiery Furies' force,

She hath the bonds broke of eternal night,

Her soul unbodied of the burdenous coase.

Why then weeps Lobbins so without remorse?

O Lobb! thy loss no longer lament;

Dido n['] is⁹ dead, but into heaven hent.¹⁰

O happy herse!

Cease now, my Muse, now cease thy sorrows'
source;

O joyful verse!

"Why wail we then? why weary we the gods
with plaints,

As if some evil were to her betight?¹¹

She reigns a goddess now among the saints,

That whilom was the saint of shepherds' Night,

And is install'd now in heaven's height.

I see thee, blessed soul! I see

Walk in Elysian fields so free.

O happy herse!

Might I once come to thee (O that I might!)

O joyful verse!

"Unwise and wretched men, to weet what's
good or ill,

We deem of death as doom of ill desert;

But knew we, fools, what it us brings until,

Die would we daily, once it to expert!¹²

No danger there the shepherd can astert;¹³

Fair fields and pleasant lays¹⁴ there be'n;

The fields ay fresh, the grass ay green.

O happy herse!

Make haste, ye shepherds, thither to revert.

O joyful verse!

"Dido is gone afore (whose turn shall be the
next?)

There lives she with the bless'd gods in bliss;

There drinks she nectar with ambrosia mixt,

And joys enjoys that mortal men do miss.

The honour now of highest gods she is,

That whilom was poor shepherd's pride,

While here on earth she did abide.

O happy herse!

Cease now, my song, my woe now wasted is;

O joyful verse!"

T. Ah! frank sheph'rd, how be thy verses
meint¹⁵

With doleful pleassance, so as I not wot

Whether rejoice or weep for great constraint!

Thine be the cosset, well hast thou it got.

Up, Colin, up, enough thou mourn'd hast;

Now gins to mizzle,¹⁶ his we homeward fast.

COLIN'S EMBLEM:

La mort ny mord. (Death doth not bite.)

DECEMBER.

ÆGLOGA DUODECIMA.—ARGUMENT.

*This Æglogue (even as the first began) is ended with a
complaint of Colin to god Pan: wherein, as weary*

⁹ Taken, received.

¹⁰ Betided, happened.

¹¹ Experience.

¹² Befall unawares, startle.

¹³ Leas, plains.

¹⁴ Mingled.

¹⁵ It begins to rain a little.

¹ Dressed.

² Wrought into a head, like a nosegay.

³ Withered leaves.

⁴ Mad.

⁵ Slippery.

⁶ Labour.

⁷ Is not.

⁸ Despite.

of his former ways, he proportioneth his life to the four seasons of the year ; comparing his youth to the spring time, when he was fresh and free from love's folly. His manhood to the summer, which, he saith, was consumed with great heat and excessive drouth, caused through a comet or blazing star, by which he meaneth love ; which passion is commonly compared to such flames and immoderate heat. His riper years he resemblance to an unseasonable harvest, wherein the fruits fall ere they be ripe. His latter age to winter's chill and frosty season, now drawing near to his last end.

THE gentle shepherd sat beside a spring,
All in the shadow of a bushy brere,¹
That Colin hight, which well could pipe and sing,
For he of Tityrus his song did lear :²

There as he sat in secret shade alone,
Thus gan he make of love his piteous moan.

"O sov'reign Pan ! thou god of shepherds all,
Which of our tender lambkins takest keep,³
And, when our flocks into mischance might fall,
Dost save from mischief the unwary sheep,
Alas of their masters hast no less regard
Than of the flocks, which thou dost watch
and ward ;

"I thee beseech (so be thou deign to hear
Rude ditties, tun'd to shepherd's oaten reed,
Or if I ever sonnet sung so clear,
As it with pleassance might thy fancy feed),
Hearken a while, from thy green cabinet,
The rural song of careful Colinet.

"Whilom in youth, when flower'd my joyful
Spring,
Like swallow swift I wander'd here and there ;
For heat of heedless lust me so did sting,
That I of doubted danger had no fear :
I went the wasteful woods and forest wide,
Withouten dread of wolves to be espied.

"I went to range amid the mazy thicket,
And gather nuts to make my Christmas-game,
And joy'd oft to chase the trembling pricket,⁴
Or hunt the heartless hare till she were tame.

What reck'd I of wintry age's waste ?
Then deem'd I my spring would ever last.

"How often have I scal'd the craggy oak,
All to dialodge the raven of her nest ?
How have I wearied, with many a stroke,
The stately walnut-tree, the while the rest
Under the tree fell all for nuts at strife ?
For like to me was liberty and life.

"And, for I was in those same looser years
(Whether the Muse so wrought me from my
birth,

Or I too much believ'd my shepherd peers),
Somedae y-bent⁵ to song and music's mirth,
A good old shepherd, Wrenock was his name,
Made me by art more cunning in the same.

"From thence I durst in derring-do⁶ compare
With shepherd's swain whatever fed in field ;

And, if that Hobbinol right judgment bare,
To Pan his own self pipe I need not yield :

For, if the flocking nymphs did follow Pan,
The wiser Muses after Colin ran.

"But, ah ! such pride at length was ill repaid ;
The shepherds' god (pardie ! god was he none)
My hurtless pleassance did me ill upbraid ;
My freedom lorn,⁷ my life he left to moan.

Love they him call'd that gave me check-
mate,
But better might they have behote⁸ him
Hate.

"Then gan my lovely Spring bid me farewell,
And Summer season sped him to display
(For Love then in the Lion's house⁹ did dwell)
The raging fire that kindled at his ray.

A comet stir'd up that unkindly heat,
That reign'd (as men said) in Venus' seat.

"Forth was I led, not as I wont afore,
When choice I had to choose my wand'ring
way,

But whither luck and love's unbridled lore
Would lead me forth on Fancy's bit to play :
The bush my bed, the bramble was my
bow'r ;

The woods can witness many a woeful stour.¹⁰

"Where I was wont to seek the honey-bee,
Working her formal rooms in waxen frame,
The grialy toadstool grown there might I see,
And loath'd paddocks¹¹ lording on the same :
And where the chanting birds lull'd me
asleep,

The ghastly owl her grievous inn¹² doth keep.

"Then, as the Spring gives place to elder time,
And bringeth forth the fruit of Summer's
pride ;

All so my age, now pass'd youthly prime,
To things of riper season self applied,
And learn'd of lighter timber ootes to frame,
Such as might save my sheep and me from
shame.

"To make fine cages for the nightingale,
And baskets of bulrushes, was my wont :
Who to entrap the fish in winding sale¹³
Was better seen,¹⁴ or hurtful beasts to hunt ?
I learn'd alas the signs of heav'n to ken,¹⁵
How Phoebus fails,¹⁶ where Venus sets, and
when.

"And tri'd time yet taught me greater things ;
The sudden rising of the raging seas,¹⁷
The sooth¹⁷ of birds by beating of their wings,
The pow'r of herbs, both which can hurt and
ease,

And which be wont t'enrage the restless sheep,
And which be wont to work eternal sleep.

"But, ah ! unwise and witless Colin Clout,
That kid'st¹⁸ the hidden kinds of many a weed,
Yet kid'st not one to cure thy sore heart-root,

which is the midst of summer ; a pretty allegory" de-
signed to imply the heat of Colin's passion.

¹ Briar.

² Learn.

³ Buck.

⁴ Deeds of daring.

⁵ E. K. says : "He imagineth simply that Cupid,

which is Love, had his abode in the hot sign Leo,

³ Care.

⁵ Somewhat inclined.

⁷ Lost.

⁸ Called.

¹⁰ Affliction.

¹¹ Toads.

¹² Net of sorrow or wicker-work.

¹³ Know.

¹⁷ Soothsaying, omens.

¹⁴ Abode.

¹⁵ Skilled.

¹⁶ How the moon wanes.

¹⁷ Knewest.

Whose rankling wound as yet does rifely ¹ bleed.
Why liv'st thou still, and yet hast thy death's
wound?

Why diest thou still, and yet alive art found?

"Thus is my Summer worn away and wasted,
Thus is my Harvest hasten'd all too rathe ; ²
The ear that budded fair is burnt and blasted,
And all my hop'd gain is turn'd to scathe.

Of all the seed that in my youth was sown,
Was none but brakes and brambles to be
mown.

"My boughs, with blooms that crown'd were at
first,

And promis'd of timely fruit such store,
Are left both bare and barren now at erst ; ³
The flattering fruit is fall'n to ground before,
And rotted ere they were half mellow ripe ;
My harvest, waste, my hope away did wipe.

"The fragrant flow'rs, that in my garden grew,
Be wither'd, as they had been gather'd long :
Their roots be drier'd up for lack of dew,
Yet dew'd with tears they have been ever
among. ⁴

Ah ! who has wrought my Rosalind this spite,
To spoil the flow'rs that should her garland
dight ? ⁵

"And I, that whilom wont to frame my pipe
Unto the shifting of the shepherd's foot,
Such follies now have gather'd as too ripe,
And cast them out as rotten and unswoot. ⁶
The looser lass I cast to please no more ;
One if I please, enough is me therefor.

"And thus of all my harvest-hope I have
Naught reap'd but a weedy crop of care ;
Which, when I thought have thresh'd in swell-
ling sheave,

Cockle for corn, and chaff for barley, bare :
Soon as the chaff should in the fan be fin'd, ⁷
All was blown away of the wav'ring wind.

"So now my year draws to his latter term,
My Spring is spent, my Summer burnt up quite ;
My Harvest hastes to stir up Winter stern,
And bids him claim with rigorous rage his right :
So now he storms with many a sturdy stour ; ⁸
So now his blustering blast each coast doth
scur.

"The careful cold ⁹ hath nipp'd my rugged rind,
And in my face deep furrows ead hath pight : ¹⁰
My head besprant ¹¹ with hoary frost I find,
And by mine eye the crow his claw doth write :
Delight is laid abed, and pleasure past ;
No sun now shines ; clouds have all overcast.

"Now leave, ye shepherds' boys, your merry
glee ;

My Muse is hoarse and weary of this stound : ¹²
Here will I hang my pipe upon this tree ;
Was never pipe of reed did better sound :
Winter is come, that blows the bitter blast,
And after Winter dreary death does haste.

"Gather together, ye my little flock,
My little flock, that was to me so lief ; ¹³
Let me, ah ! let me in your folds ye lock,
Ere the breme ¹⁴ winter breed you greater grief.
Winter is come, that blows the baleful
breath,
And after Winter cometh timely death.

"Adieu, delights, that lull'd me asleep ;
Adieu, my dear, whose love I bought so dear ;
Adieu, my little lambs and lov'd sheep ;
Adieu, ye woods, that oft my witness were :
Adieu, good Hobbinol, that was so true ;
Tell Rosalind, Colin bids her adieu."

COLLIN'S EPIGRAM :

Vivitur ingenio : ceteris mortis erunt. (The
creations of genius live ; all other things
shall be the prey of death.)

EPILOGUE.

Lo ! I have made a Calendar for ev'ry year,
That steel in strength, and time in durance,
shall outwear ;

And, if I mark'd well the stars' revolution,
It shall continue till the world's dissolution,
To teach the ruder shepherd how to feed his
sheep,

And from the falser's fraud his folded flock to
keep.

Go, little Calendar ! thou hast a free pas-
sage ;

Go but a lowly gait amongst the meaner sort :
Dare not to match thy pipe with Tityrus ¹⁵ his
style,

Nor with the Pilgrim that the Ploughman
play'd a while ; ¹⁶

But follow them far off, and their high steps
adore

The better please, the worse despise ; I ask no
more.

MERCE NON MERCEDE.

(For recompense, but not for hire.)

Tales" formerly stood a poem of great length, full of
attacks on the clergy like those made in Spenser's fifth,
seventh and ninth Eclogues, and called *The Ploughman's Tale*. Its authenticity is now doubted, and it is
rejected from modern editions ; but in Spenser's day it
was probably considered genuine, and its burthen and
tone may naturally have given it an especial promi-
nence at a time when the great and bitter controversy
between Catholicism and Protestantism was by no
means at an end in England.

¹ Abundantly.

² At last.

³ Adorn.

⁴ Sifted.

⁵ "For care is said to cool the blood."—E. K. See
note 2, page 189.

⁶ Set, marked.

⁷ Effort.

⁸ Bitter.

⁹ Probably Chaucer—among whose "Canterbury

¹⁰ Early.

¹¹ Ever and anon.

¹² Unsweet.

¹³ Assault.

¹⁴ Besprinkled.

¹⁵ Dear.

¹⁶ Virgil.

"Why then doth flesh, a bubble-glass of breath,
Hunt after honour and advancement vain,
And rear a trophy for devouring death,
With so great labour and long-lasting pain,
As if his days for ever should remain?
Since all that in this world is great or gay
Doth as a vapour vanish and decay.

"Look back, who list, unto the former ages,
And call to count what is of them become:
Where be those learned wits and antique sages
Which of all wisdom knew the perfect sum?
Where those great warriors, which did overcome
The world with conquest of their might and
main,
And made one meer¹ of th' earth and of their
reign?

"What now is of th' Assyrian lioness,
Of whom no footing now on earth appears?
What of the Persian bear's outrageousness,
Whose memory is quite worn out with years?
Who of the Grecian leopard² now aught hears,
That overran the East with greedy power,
And left his whelps their kingdoms to devour?

"And where is that same great sev'n-headed
Beast

That made all nations vassals of her pride,
To fall before her feet at her behest,
And on the neck of all the world did ride?
Where doth she all that wondrous wealth now
hide?

With her own weight down press'd now she lies,
And by her heaps her hugeness testifies.

"O Rome, thy ruin I lament and rue,
And in thy fall my fatal overthrow,
That whilom was, whilst heav'n's with equal view
Deign'd to behold me, and their gifts bestow,
The picture of thy pride in pompous show:
And of the whole world as thou wast the empress,
So I of this small northern world was princess.

"To tell the beauty of my buildings fair,
Adorn'd with purest gold and precious stone;
To tell my riches and endowments rare,
That by my foes are now all spent and gone;
To tell my forces, matchable to none;
Were but lost labour, that few would believe,
And with rehearsing would me more aggrieve.

"High tow'rs, fair temples, goodly theatres,
Strong walls, rich porches, princely palaces,
Large streets, brave houses, sacred sepulchres,
Sure gates, sweet gardens, stately galleries
Wrought with fair pillars and fine imageries;
All those (O pity!) now are turn'd to dust,
And overgrown with black oblivion's rust.

"Thereto for warlike pow'r, and people's store,
In Brittany was none to match with me,
That many often did aby full sore:
Nor Troynovant,³ though elder sister she,
With my great forces might compar'd be;
That stout Pendragon⁴ to his peril felt,
Who in a siege sev'n years about me dwelt.

¹ Boundary.

² Alexander the Great.

³ London.

"But, long ere this, Bonduca,⁵ Britoness,
Her mighty host against my bulwarks brought;
Bonduca! that victorious conqueress,
That, lifting up her brave heroic thought
'Bove women's weakness, with the Romans
fought,
Fought, and in field against them thrice pre-
vail'd:

Yet was she foil'd, when as she me assail'd.

"And though at last by force I conquer'd were
Of hardy Saxons, and became their thrall;
Yet was I with much bloodshed bought full
dear,
And pri'd⁶ with laughter of their General:
The monument of whose sad funeral,
For wonder of the world, long in me lasted;
But now to naught, through spoil of time, is
wasted.

"Wasted it is, as if it never were;
And all the rest, that me so honour'd made,
And of the world admir'd ev'rywhere,
Is turn'd to smoke, that doth to nothing fade;
And of that brightness now appears no shade,
But griety shades, such as do haunt in hell
With fearful fiends, that in deep darkness
dwell.

"Where my high steeples whilom us'd to
stand,

On which the lordly falcon went to tow'r,
There now is but a heap of lime and sand
For the screech-owl to build her baleful bow'r:
And where the nightingale went forth to pour
Her restless plaints, to comfort wakeful lovers,
There now haunt yelling mews and whining
plovers.

"And where the crystal Thamis went to slide
In silver channel, down along the lee,
About whose flow'ry banks on either side
A thousand nymphs, with mirthful jollity,
Were wont to play, from all annoyance free;
There now no river's course is to be seen,
But moorish fens, and marishes ever green.

"Seems, that that gentle River, for great grief
Of my mishaps, which oft I to him plain'd,—
Or for to shun the horrible mischief,
With which he saw my cruel foes me pain'd,
And his pure streams with guiltless blood oft
stain'd,—

From my unhappy neighbourhood far fled,
And his sweet waters away with him led.

"There also, where the wing'd ships were seen
In liquid waves to cut their foamy way,
And thousand fishers number'd to have been,
In that wide lake looking for plenteous prey
Of fish, which they with baits us'd to betray,
Is now no lake, nor any fisher's store,
Nor ever ship shall sail there any more.

"They all are gone, and all with them is gone;
Nor aught to me remains, but to lament
My long decay, which no man else doth moan.

⁴ The father of King Arthur—Uther Pendragon.

⁵ Boadicea.

⁶ Purchased.

Now gins to shoot up fast, and flourish fair
In learned arts, and goodly governance,
That him to highest honour shall advance.
Brave imp¹ of Bedford, grow apace in bounty,
And count of wisdom more than of thy county!

"Nor may I let thy husband's sister² die,
That goodly lady, since she eke did spring
Out of his stock and famous family,
Whose praises I to future age do sing;
And forth out of her happy womb did bring
The sacred brood of learning and all honour;
In whom the heav'n's pour'd all their gifts upon
her.

"Most gentle spirit, breath'd from above
Out of the bosom of the Maker's bliss,
In whom all bounty and all virtuous love
Appear'd in their native properties,
And did enrich that noble breast of his
With treasure passing all this world's worth;
Worthy of heav'n itself, which brought it forth.

"His blest spirit, full of pow'r divine
And influence of all celestial grace,
Loathing this sinful earth and earthly ayme,
Fled back too soon unto his native place;
Too soon for all that did his love embrace;
Too soon for all this wretched world, whom he
Robb'd of all right and true nobility.

"Yet, ere his happy soul to heaven went
Out of this fleshly gaol, he did devise
Unto his heav'nly Maker to present
His body as a spotless sacrifice;
And chose that guilty hands of enemies
Should pour forth th' off'ring of his guiltless
blood:

So life exchanging for his country's good.

"O noble spirit, live there ever blest,
The world's late wonder, and the heav'n's new
joy;

Live ever there, and leave me here distress'd
With mortal cares and cumbrous world's annoy!
But, where thou dost that happiness enjoy,
Bid me, O! bid me quickly come to thee,
That happy there I may thee always see!

"Yet, whilst the Fates afford me vital breath,
I will it spend in speaking of thy praise;
And sing to thee, until that timely death
By heav'n

Thereto:

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"Yet wi

¹ Shoot,

² Lady,

³ Mary,

brother's

dedicated,

⁴ Fabled

Than thou thyself, thine own self's valiance,
That, whilst thou livedst, mad'st the forests ring,
And fields resound, and flocks to leap and dance,
And shepherds leave their lambs unto mis-
chance,

To run thy shrill Arcadian pipe to hear?

O happy were those days, thrice happy were!

"But now more happy thou, and wretched we,
Which want the wonted sweetness of thy voice,
While thou now in Elysian fields so free,
With Orpheus, and with Linus,⁴ and the choice
Of all that ever did in rhymes rejoice,
Conversest, and dost hear their heav'nly lays,
And they hear thine, and thine do better praise.

"So there thou livest, singing evermore,
And here thou livest, being ever sung
Of us, which living lov'd thee afore,
And now thee worship 'mongst that blest
throng

Of heav'nly poets and herôes strong.

So thou both here and there immortal art,
And ev'rywhere through excellent desert.⁵

"But such as neither of themselves can sing,
Nor yet are sung of others for reward,
Die in obscure oblivion, as the thing
Which never was; nor ever with regard
Their names shall of the later age be heard,
But shall in rusty darkness ever lie,
Unless they mention'd be with infamy.

"What booteth it to have been rich alive?
What to be great? what to be gracious?
When after death no token doth survive
Of former being in this mortal house,
But sleeps in dust, dead and inglorious,
Like beast whose breath but in his nostrils is,
And hath no hope of happiness or bliss.

"How many great ones may remember'd be,
Which in their days most famously did flourish;
Of whom no word we hear, nor sign now see,
But as things wip'd out with a sponge do perish,
Because they living car'd not to cherish
No gentle wit, through pride or covetise,
Which might their names for ever memorise!

"Provide therefore, ye princes, whilst ye live,
That of the Muses ye may friended be,
Which unto men eternity do give;

At length, by demonstration me to teach,
Before mine eyes strange sights presented were,
Like tragie pageants seeming to appear.

I.

I SAW an Image, all of massey gold,
Plac'd on high upon an altar fair,
That all, which did the same from far behold,
Might worship it, and fall on lowest stair.
Not that great idol might with this compare,
To which th' Assyrian tyrant would have made
The holy brethren falsely to have pray'd.
But th' altar, on the which this image stay'd,
Was (O great pity !) built of brittle clay,
That shortly the foundation decay'd,
With show'rs of heav'n and tempests worn away ;
Then down it fell, and low in ashes lay,
Scorn'd of ev'ry one which by it went ;
That I, it seeing, dearly did lament.

II.

Next unto this a stately Tow'r appear'd,
Built all of richest stone that might be found,
And nigh unto the heav'ns in height uprear'd,
But plac'd on a plot of sandy ground :
Not that great Tow'r, which is so much renown'd
For tongues' confusion in Holy Writ,
King Ninus' work, might be compar'd to it.
But O ! vain labours of terrestrial wit,
That builds so strongly on so frail a soil,
As with each storm does fall away, and flit,
And gives the fruit of all your travail's toil
To be the prey of Time, and Fortune's spoil !
I saw this tow'r fall suddenly to dust,
That nigh with grief thereof my heart was brust.

III.

Then did I see a pleasant Paradise,
Full of sweet flow'rs and daintiest delights,
Such as on earth man could not more devise,
With pleasures choice to feed his cheerful sprites:
Not that which Merlin by his magic sleights
Made for the gentle Squire, to entertain
His fair Belphebe, could this garden stain.
But O short pleasure, bought with lasting pain !
Why will hereafter any flesh delight
In earthly bliss, and joy in pleasures vain,
Since that I saw this garden wasted quite,
That where it was scarce seem'd any sight ?
That I, which once that beauty did behold,
Could not from tears my melting eyes withhold.

IV.

Soon after this a Giant came in place,
Of wondrous pow'r, and of exceeding stature,
That none durst view the horror of his face ;
Yet was he mild of speech, and meek of nature :
Not he, which in despite of his Creator
With railing terms defied the Jewish host,
Might with this mighty one in hugeness boast ;
For from the one he could to th' other coast
Stretch his strong thighs, and th' ocean over-
stride,
And reach his hand into his enemies' host.
But see the end of pomp and fleshly pride !
One of his feet unware from him did slide,

¹ The Marls of Leicester and Warwick.

That down he fell into the deep abyss,
Where drown'd with him is all his earthly bliss.

V.

Then did I see a Bridge, made all of gold,
Over the sea from one to other side,
Withouten prop or pillar it t' uphold,
But like the colour'd rainbow arch'd wide :
Not that great arch which Trajan edified,
To be a wonder to all age ensuing,
Was matchable to this in equal viewing.
But ah ! what boots it to see earthly thing
In glory or in greatness to excel,
Since time doth greatest things to ruin bring ?
This goodly bridge, one foot not fasten'd well,
Gan fail, and all the rest down shortly fell,
Nor of so brave a building aught remain'd,
That grief thereof my spirit greatly pain'd.

VI.

I saw two Bears,¹ as white as any milk,
Lying together in a mighty cave,
Of mild aspect, and hair as soft as silk,
That salvage nature seem'd not to have,
Nor after greedy spoil of blood to crave :
Two fairer beasts might not elsewhere be found,
Although the compass² world were sought
around.

But what can long abide above this ground
In state of bliss, or steadfast happiness ?
The cave, in which these bears lay sleeping
sound,
Was but of earth, and with her weightiness
Upon them fell, and did unware oppress ;
That, for great sorrow of their sudden fate,
Henceforth all world's felicity I hate.

Much was I troubled in my heavy sprite
At sight of these sad spectacles forepast,
That all my senses were bereav'd quite,
And I in mind remain'd sore aghast,
Distraught 'twixt fear and pity ; when at last
I heard a voice, which loudly to me call'd,
That with the sudden shrill I was appall'd.
" Behold," said it, " and by ensample see,
That all is vanity and grief of mind,
Nor other comfort in this world can be,
But hope of heav'n, and heart to God inclin'd ;
For all the rest must needs be left behind : "
With that it bade me to the other side
To cast mine eye, where other sights I spied.

I.

UPON that famous river's farther shore
There stood a snowy Swan, of heav'nly hue,
And gentle kind as ever fowl afore ;
A fairer one in all the goodly crew
Of white Strymonian brood might no man view :
There he most sweetly sung the prophecy
Of his own death in doleful elegy.

At last, when all his mourning melody
He ended had, that both the shores resounded,
Feeling the fit that him forewarn'd to die,
With lofty flight above the earth he bounded,
And out of sight to highest heaven mounted,

² Round.

PROSOPOPOIA:

OR,

MOTHER HUBBERD'S TALE.

[1591.]

DEDICATION
TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE LADY COMPTON AND
MOUNTEAGLE.¹

MOST fair and virtuous Lady; having often sought opportunity by some good means to make known to your Ladyship the humble affection and faithful duty which I have always professed, and am bound to bear to that house from whence ye spring, I have at length found occasion to remember the same, by making a simple present to you of these my idle labours; which having long since composed in the raw conceit of my youth, I lately amongst other papers lighted upon, and was by others, which liked the same, moved to set them forth. Simple is the device, and the composition mean, yet carrieth some delight, even the rather because of the simplicity and meanness thus personated. The same I beseech your Ladyship take in good part, as a pledge of that profession which I have made to you; and keep with you until, with some other more worthy labour, I do redeem it out of your hands, and discharge my utmost duty. Till then, wishing your Ladyship all increase of honour and happiness, I humbly take leave.

Your Ladyship's ever humbly,
ED. SP.

It was the month in which the righteous Maid,²
That for disdain of sinful world's upbraid
Fled back to heav'n, whence she was first conceiv'd,

Into her silver bow'r the sun receiv'd;
And the hot Syrian Dog on him awaiting,
After the chafed Lion's cruel baiting,
Corrupted had th' air with his noisome breath,
And pour'd on th' earth plague, pestilence, and death.

Amongst the rest a wicked malady
Reign'd amongst men, that many did to die,
Depriv'd of sense and ordinary reason,

¹ Anne, fifth daughter of Sir John Spencer of Althorpe. See note 10, page 612.

That it to leaches seem'd strange and season.³
My fortune was, 'mongst many others me',
To be partaker of their common woe;
And my weak body, set on fire with grief,
Was robb'd of rest and natural relief.
In this ill plight there came to visit me
Some friends, who, sorry my sad case to see,
Began to comfort me in cheerful wise,
And means of gladsome solace to devise.
But seeing kindly sleep refuse to do
His office, and my feeble eyes forego,
They sought my troubled sense how to deceive
With talk that might unquiet fancies reave;
And, sitting all in seats about me round,
With pleasant tales (fit for that idle stound⁴)
They cast in course to waste the weary hours:
Some told of ladies, and their paramours;
Some of brave knights, and their renown'd
squires;

Some of the fairies and their strange attires:
And some of giants, hard to be believ'd;
That the delight thereof me much reliev'd.
Amongst the rest a good old woman was,
Hight Mother Hubbard, who did far surpass
The rest in honest mirth, that seem'd her well.
She, when her turn was come her tale to tell,
Told of a strange adventure that betided
Betwixt the Fox and th' Ape by him misguid'd;
The which, for that my sense it greatly pleased,
All were my spirit heavy and diseased,
I'll write in terms as she the same did say,
So well as I her words remember may.
No Muse's aid me needs hereto to call;
Base⁵ is the style, and matter mean withal.

Whilom (said she) before the world was civil,
The Fox and th' Ape, disliking of their evil
And hard estate, determin'd to seek
Their fortunes far abroad, like with his like:
For both were crafty and unhappy witted;
Two fellows might nowhere be better fitted.
The Fox, that first this cause of grief did find,
'Gan first thus plain his case with words unkind.
"Neighbour Ape, and my gossip eke beside
(Both two sure bands in friendship to be tied),
To whom may I more trustfully complain
The evil plight, that doth me sore constrain,
And hope thereof to find due remedy?

² Astraea; placed in the Zodiac as the sign Virgo, which the sun enters in August.

³ Uncommon.

⁴ Occasion, hour.

⁵ Humble.

Hear, then, my pain and inward agony.
 Thus many years I now have spent and worn;
 In mean regard, and basest fortune's scorn,
 Doing my country service as I might,
 No less, I dare say, than the proudest wight;
 And still I hoped to be up advanc'd
 For my good parts; but still it has mischanc'd.
 Now therefore that no longer hope I see,
 But froward fortune still to follow me,
 And losels¹ lifted high, where I did look,
 I mean to turn the next leaf of the book.
 Yet, ere that any way I do betake,
 I mean my gossip privy first to make."
 "Ah! my dear gossip," answer'd then the Ape,
 "Deeply do your sad words my wits awake,²
 Both for because your grief doth great appear,
 And eke because myself am touch'd near:
 For I likewise have wasted much good time,
 Still waiting to preferment up to climb,
 Whilst others always have before me slept,
 And from my beard the fat away have swept;
 That now unto despair I gin to grow,
 And mean for better wind about to throw.
 Therefore to me, my trusty friend, aread³
 Thy counsel; two is better than one head."
 "Certes," said he, "I mean me to disguise
 In some strange habit, after uncouth wise,
 Or like a pilgrim, or a limiter,⁴
 Or like a gipsy, or a juggeler,
 And so to wander to the world's end,
 To seek my fortune where I may it mend:
 For worse than that I have I cannot meet.
 Wide is the world, I wot, and ev'ry street
 Is full of fortunes and adventures strange,
 Continually subject unto change.
 Say, my fair brother now, if this device
 Doth like you, or may you to like entice."
 "Surely," said th' Ape, "it likes me wondrous
 well;

And, would ye not poor fellowship expel,
 Myself would offer you t' accompany
 In this adventure's chanceful jeopardy:
 For to wax old at home in idleness
 Is disadvantageous, and quite fortuneless;
 Abroad, where change is, good may gotten be."

The Fox was glad, and quickly did agree:
 So both resolv'd, the morrow next ensuing,
 So soon as day appear'd to people's viewing,
 On their intended journey to proceed;
 And over night, whatso thereto did need,
 Each did prepare, in readiness to be.
 The morrow next, so soon as one might see
 Light out of heaven's windows forth to look,
 Both their habiliments unto them took,
 And put themselves (a God's name) on their
 way;

When as the Ape, beginning well to weigh
 This hard adventure, thus began t' advise:
 "Now read,⁵ Sir Reynold, as ye be right wise,
 What course ye ween is best for us to take,
 That for ourselves we may a living make.
 Whether shall we profess some trade or skill?
 Or shall we vary our device at will,

Even as new occasion appears?
 Or shall we tie ourselves for certain years
 To any service, or to any place?
 For it behoves, ere that into the race
 We enter, to resolve first hereupon."
 "Now surely, brother," said the Fox anon,
 "Ye have this matter motion'd in season:
 For ev'ry thing that is begun with reason
 Will come by ready means unto his end;
 But things miscounsell'd must needs miswend.⁶
 Thus therefore I advise upon the case,
 That not to any certain trade or place,
 Nor any man, we should ourselves apply;
 For why should he that is at liberty
 Make himself bond? since then we are free-born,
 Let us all servile base subjection scorn;
 And, as we be sons of the world so wide,
 Let us our father's heritage divide,
 And challenge to ourselves our portions due
 Of all the patrimony, which a few
 Now hold in hugger-mugger⁷ in their hand,
 And all the rest do rob of good and land.
 For now a few have all, and all have naught,
 Yet all be brethren alike dearly bought:
 There is no right in this partition,
 Nor was it so by institution
 Ordain'd first, nor by the law of Nature,
 But that she gave like blessing to each creature,
 As well of worldly livelod⁸ as of life,
 That there might be no difference nor strife,
 Nor aught call'd mine or thine: thrice happy then
 Was the condition of mortal men.
 That was the golden age of Saturn old,
 But this might better be the world of gold;
 For without gold now nothing will be got,
 Therefore (if please you) this shall be our plot:
 We will not be of any occupation;
 Let such vile vassals, born to base vocation,
 Drudge in the world, and for their living drail,⁹
 Which have no wit to live withouten toil.
 But we will walk about the world at pleasure,
 Like two free men, and make our ease our trea-
 sure.

Free men some beggars call, but they be free;
 And they which call them so more beggars be:
 For they do swink¹⁰ and sweat to feed the other,
 Who live like lords of that which they do gather,
 And yet do never thank them for the same,
 But as their due by nature do it claim.
 Such will we fashion both ourselves to be,
 Lords of the world; and so will wander free
 Where so us listeth, uncontroull'd of any:
 Hard is our hap, if we (amongst so many)
 Light not on some that may our state amend;
 Seldom but some good cometh ere the end."

Well seem'd the Ape to like this ordinance:
 Yet, well considering of the circumstance,
 As pausing in great doubt, a while he stay'd,
 And afterwards with grave advisement said;
 "I cannot, my lief¹¹ brother, like but well
 The purpose of the complot which ye tell:
 For well I wot (compar'd to all the rest
 Of each degree) that beggars' life is best;

¹ Base, worthless persons.

² Confound.

³ Declare.

⁴ A friar licensed to beg within a certain district.

⁵ Tell.

⁷ Secretly.

⁸ Livelihood, means of living.

⁹ Work slavishly.

¹⁰ Toil.

⁶ Go wrong.

¹¹ Dear.

And they, that think themselves the best of all,
 Ofttimes to begging are content to fall :
 But this I wot withal, that we shall run
 Into great danger, like to be undone,
 Wildly to wander thus in the world's eye,
 Withouten passport or good warrant¹,
 For fear lest we like rogues should be reputed,
 And for ear-mark'd beasts abroad be bruted ;
 Therefore I read,¹ that we our counsels call,
 How to prevent this mischief ere it fall,
 And how we may, with most security,
 Beg amongst those that beggars do defy."²
 "Right well, dear gossip, ye advis'd have,"
 Said then the Fox, "but I this doubt will save:
 For ere we farther pass I will devise
 A passport for us both in fittest wise,
 And by the names of Soldiers us protect ;
 That now is thought a civil begging sect.
 Be you the soldier, for you likest are
 For manly semblance and small skill in war :
 I will but wait on you, and, as occasion
 Falls out, myself fit for the same will fashion."

The passport ended, both they forward went ;
 The Ape clad soldierlike, fit for th' intent,
 In a blue jacket with a cross of red
 And many slits, as if that he had shed
 Much blood through many wounds therein receiv'd,

Which had the use of his right arm bereav'd ;
 Upon his head an old Scotch cap he wore,
 With a plume feather all to pieces tore ;
 His breeches were made after the new cut,
Al Portuguese, loose like an empty gut ;
 And his hose broken high above the heeling,
 And his shoes beaten out with travelling.
 But neither sword nor dagger he did bear ;
 Seems that no foe's revengement he did fear ;
 Instead of them a handsome bat³ he held,
 On which he lean'd, as one far in eld.⁴
 Shame light on him, that through so false
 illusion

Doth turn the name of Soldiers to abusion,
 And that, which is the noblest mystery,⁵
 Brings to reproach and common infamy !
 Long they thus travell'd, yet never met
 Adventure which might them a-working set :
 Yet many ways they sought, and many tried ;
 Yet for their purposes none fit espied.

At last they chanc'd to meet upon the way
 A simple husbandman in garments gray ;
 Yet, though his vesture were but mean and
 base,

A good yeoman he was, of honest place,
 And more for thrift did care than for gay
 clothing :

Gay without good is good heart's greatest
 loathing.

The Fox, him spying, bade the Ape him dight⁶
 To play his part, for lo ! he was in sight
 That (if he err'd not) should them entertain,
 And yield them timely profit for their pain.
 Eftsoons the Ape himself gan up to rear,
 And on his shoulders high his bat to bear,

¹ Advise.² Staff, baton.³ Far advanced in age.⁴ Distrust.⁵ Profession.

As if good service he were fit to do
 (But little thrift for him he did it to !)
 And stoutly forward he his steps did strain,
 That like a handsome swain it him became :
 When as they nigh approach'd, that good
 man,

Seeing them wander loosely, first began
 T' inquire, of custom, what and whence they
 were ?

To whom the Ape : "I am a Soldier,
 That late in wars have spent my dearest blood,
 And in long service lost both limbs and good ;
 And now, constrain'd that trade to overgive,
 I driven am to seek some means to live :
 Which might it you in pity please t' afford,
 I would be ready, both in deed and word,
 To do you faithful service all my days.
 This iron world"—that same he weeping says—
 "Brings down the stoutest hearts to lowest
 state :

For misery doth bravest minds abate,
 And make them seek for that they wont to
 scorn,

Of fortune and of hope at once forlorn."
 The honest man, that heard him thus complain,
 Was griev'd, as he had felt part of his pain ;
 And, well dispos'd him some relief to show,
 Ask'd if in husbandry he aught did know,
 To plough, to plant, to reap, to rake, to sow,
 To hedge, to ditch, to thrash, to thatch, to
 mow ?

Or to what labour else he was prepar'd ?
 For husband's⁷ life is labourous and hard.
 When as the Ape him heard so much to talk
 Of labour, that did from his liking balk,⁸
 He would have slipp'd the collar handsomely,
 And to him said : "Good Sir, full glad am I
 To take what pains may any living wight :
 But my late maim'd limbs lack wonted might
 To do their kindly services as needeth :
 Scarce this right hand the mouth with diet
 feedeth,

So that it may no painful work endure,
 Nor to strong labour can itself inure.
 But if that any other place you have,
 Which asks small pains, but thriftiness to save,
 Or care to overlook, or trust to gather,
 Ye may me trust as your own ghostly father."
 With that the husbandman gan him advise,
 That it for him were fittest exercise
 Cattle to keep, or grounds to oversee ;
 And ask'd him, if he could willing be
 To keep his sheep, or to attend his swine,
 Or watch his mares, or take his charge of kine ?
 "Gladly," said he, "whatever such-like pain
 Ye put on me, I will the same sustain :
 But gladliest I of your fleecy sheep
 (Might it you please) would take on me the
 keep."

For ere that unto arms I me betook,
 Unto my father's sheep I us'd to look,
 That yet the skill thereof I have not lost :
 Thereto right well this cur-dog, by my coot"—

⁶ Prepare.⁷ Husbandman's.⁸ Was at variance with his liking.⁹ Care, charge.

"It seems," said he, "right well that ye be clerks,¹

Both by your witty words, and by your works.
Is not that name enough to make a living,
To him that hath a whit of Nature's giving?
How many honest men see ye arise
Daily thereby, and grow to goodly price;²
To Deans, to Archdeacons, to Commissioners,
To Lords, to Principals, to Prebendaries?
All jolly Prelates, worthy rule to bear,
Whoever them envy: yet spite bites near.
Why should ye doubt, then, but that ye likewise
Might unto some of those in time arise?
In the meantime to live in good estate,
Loving that love, and hating those that hate;
Being some honest curate, or some vicar,
Content with little in condition sicker."³

"Ah! but," said th' Ape, "the charge is wondrous great,
To feed men's souls, and hath a heavy threat."
"To feed men's souls," quoth he, "is not in man:
For they must feed themselves, do what we can.
We are but charg'd to lay the meat before:
Eat they that list, we need to do no more.
But God it is that feeds them with His grace,—
The bread of life pour'd down from heav'nly place.

Therefore said he that with the budding rod
Did rule the Jews, *All shall be taught of God*,
That same hath Jesus Christ now to him taught,⁴
By whom the flock is rightly fed and taught:
He is the Shepherd, and the Priest is he;
We but his shepherd swains ordain'd to be.
Therefore herewith do not yourselves dismay;
Nor is the pain so great, but bear ye may;
For not so great, as it was wont of yore,
It's now-a-days, nor half so strait and sore:
They whilom us'd duly ev'ry day
Their service and their holy things to say,
At morn and ev'n, besides their Anthems sweet,
Their penny Masses, and their Complines meet,
Their Diriges, their Trentals, and their Shrifts,⁵
Their memories,⁶ their singings, and their gifts.
Now all these needless works are laid away;
Now once a week, upon the Sabbath day,
It is enough to do our small devotion,
And then to follow any merry motion.

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¹ Schol

⁴ Rem

⁵ Men

A garment better than of wool or hair.

Besides, we may have lying by our sides
Our lovely lawes, or bright shining brides;
We be not tied to wilful chastity,
But have the Gospel of free liberty."

By that he ended had his ghostly sermon,
The Fox was well induc'd to be a person;
And of the priest oftmoons 'gan to inquire
How to a benefice he might aspire.

"Marry, there," said the priest, "is art indeed:
Much good deep learning one thersout may read;
For that the groundwork is and end of all,
How to obtain a beneficial.

First, therefore, when ye have in handsome wise
Yourself attir'd, as you can devise,
Then to some nobleman yourself apply,
Or other great one in the world's eye,
That hath a zealous disposition
To God, and so to his religion:

There must thou fashion eke a godly meal,
Such as no carpers may contrair reveal:
For each thing feign'd ought more wary be.
There thou must walk in sober gravity,
And seem as saintlike as Saint Radegund:
Fast much, pray oft, look lowly on the ground,
And unto ev'ry one do court'sy meek:

These looks (naught saying) do a benefice seek;
And be thou sure one not to lack ere long.
But if thee list unto the Court to throng,
And there to hunt after the hop'd prey,
Then must thou thee dispose another way:

For there thou needs must learn to laugh, to lie,
To face,⁷ to forge, to scoff, to company,
To crouch, to please, to be a beetle-stoek
Of thy great master's will, to scorn, or mock:
So may'st thou chance mock out a benefice,
Unless thou canst one conjure by device,

Or cast a figure for a Bishopric;
And if one could, it were but a school trick.
These be the ways by which, without reward,
Livings in Court be gotten, though full hard;

For nothing there is done without a fee:
The courtier needs must recompens'd be
With a benevolence, or have in gage
The primitias⁸ of your personage:
Scarcely can a Bishopric forpass them by,
But that it must be gilt in privy.

Nor do I doubt but that ye well can fashion
Yourselves thereto, according to occasion :
So fare ye well ; good courtiers may ye be !"
So, proudly neighing, from them parted he.
Then 'gan this crafty couple to devise
How for the Court themselves they might
 guise :¹

For thither they themselves meant to address,
In hope to find their happier success.
So well they shifted, that the Ape anon
Himself had clothed like a gentleman,
And the sly Fox as like to be his groom,
That to the Court in seemly sort they come ;
Where the fond² Ape, himself uprearing high
Upon his tiptoes, stalketh stately by,
As if he were some great Magnifico,
And boldly doth amongst the boldest go ;
And his man Reynold, with fine counterfeiting,³

Supports his credit and his countenance.
Then gan the courtiers gaze on ev'ry side,
And stare on him, with big looks basin-wide,⁴
Wond'ring what mister wight he was, and
 whence :

For he was clad in strange accoutrements,
Fashion'd with quaint devices never seen
In Court before, yet there all fashions be'n ;
Yet he them in newfangledness did pass :
But his behaviour altogether was
Alla Turческа, much the more admir'd ;
And his looks lofty, as if he aspir'd
To dignity, and 'sdain the low degree ;
That all, which did such strangeness in him see,
By secret means gan of his state inquire,
And privily his servant thereto hire :
Who, thoroughly arm'd against such coverture,
Reported unto all, that he was, sure,
A noble gentleman of high regard,
Which through the world had with long travel
 far'd,

And seen the manners of all beasts on ground ;
Now here arriv'd, to see if like he found.

Thus did the Ape at first him credit gain,
Which afterwards he wisely did maintain
With gallant show, and daily more augment
Through his fine feats and courtly complement ;
For he could play, and dance, and vault, and
 spring,

And all that else pertains to revelling,
Only through kindly⁵ aptness of his joints.
Besides, he could do many other points,
The which in Court him served to good stead :
For he 'mongst ladies could their fortunes read
Out of their hands, and merry leasings⁶ tell,
And juggle finely, that became him well :
But he so light was at legérdmain,
That what he touch'd came not to light again ;
Yet would he laugh it out, and proudly look,
And tell them that they greatly him mistook.
So would he scoff them out with mockery,
For he therein had great felicity ;
And with sharp quips joy'd others to deface,

Thinking that their disgracing did him grace :
So whilst that other like vain wits he pleas'd,
And made to laugh, his heart was greatly eas'd.
But the right gentle mind would bite his lip,
To hear the javel⁷ so good men to nip :
For, though the vulgar yield an open ear,
And common courtiers love to gibe and fleer
At ev'rything which they hear spoken ill,
And the best speeches with ill meaning spill ;⁸
Yet the brave Courtier,⁹ in whose beauteous
 thought

Regard of honour harbours more than aught,
Doth loathe such base condition, to backbite
Any's good name for envy or despite :
He stands on terms of honourable mind,
Nor will be carried with the common wind
Of Court's inconstant mutability,
Nor after ev'ry tattling fable fly ;
But hears and sees the follies of the rest,
And thereof gathers for himself the best :
He will not creep, nor crouch with feign'd face,
But walks upright with comely steadfast pace,
And unto all doth yield due courtesy ;
But not with kisse'd hand below the knee,
As that same apish crew is wont to do :
For he disdaineth himself t' embase thereto.
He hates foul leasings, and vile flattery,
Two filthy blots in noble gentery ;
And loathful idleness he doth detest,
The canker-worm of ev'ry gentle breast ;
The which to banish with fair exercise
Of knightly feats he daily doth devise :
Now managing the mouths of stubborn steeds,
Now practising the proof of warlike deeds,
Now his bright arms assaying, now his spear ;
Now the high aim'd ring away to bear.
At other times he casts to sue¹⁰ the chase
Of swift wild beasts, or run on foot a race,
T' enlarge his breath (large breath in arms most
 needful),

Or else by wrestling to wax strong and heedful ;
Or his stiff arms to stretch with yewen bow,
And manly legs still passing to and fro,
Without a gown'd beast him fast beside,
A vain ensample of the Persian pride ;
Who, after he had won th' Assyrian foe,
Did ever after scorn on foot to go.

Thus when this courtly gentleman with toil
Himself hath wearied, he doth recoil¹¹
Unto his rest, and there with sweet delight
Of music's skill revives his toiled sprite ;
Or else with loves and ladies' gentle sports,
The joy of youth, himself he recomforts :
Or, lastly, when the body list to pause,
His mind unto the Muses he withdraws ;
Sweet Lady Muses, Ladies of delight,
Delights of life, and ornaments of light !
With whom he close confers with wise discourse,
Of Nature's works, of heav'n's continual course,
Of foreign lands, of people different,
Of kingdoms' change, of diverse government,
Of dreadful battles of renown'd knights,

¹ Equip.² Counterfeiting.³ Natural.⁴ Worthless rascal.⁵ Foolish.⁶ Widely extended.⁷ Lies.⁸ Spoil.⁹ In the passage that follows, Spenser pays a noble tribute to his friend Sir Philip Sidney.¹⁰ Follow.¹¹ Retire.

With which he kindleth his ambitious sprites
 To like desire and praise of noble fame,
 The only upshot whereto he doth aim :
 For all his mind on honour fix'd is,
 To which he levels all his purposes,
 And in his Prince's service spends his days,
 Not so much for to gain, or for to raise
 Himself to high degree, as for his grace,
 And in his liking to win worthy place,
 Through due deserts and comely carriage,
 In whatso please employ his personage,
 That may be matter meet to gain him praise ;
 For he is fit to use in all assays,
 Whether for arms and warlike amenance,¹
 Or else for wise and civil governance ;
 For he is practis'd well in policy,
 And thereto doth his courting² most apply ;
 To learn the enterdeal³ of princes strange,
 To mark th' intent of counsels, and the change
 Of States, and eke of private men somehow,
 Supplanted by fine falsehood and fair guile ;
 Of all the which he gath'reth what is fit
 T' enrich the storehouse of his pow'rful wit,
 Which through wise speeches and grave confer-
 ence

He daily ekes,⁴ and brings to excellence.
 Such is the rightful Courtier in his kind.

But unto such the Ape lent not his mind ;
 Such were for him no fit companions ;
 Such would descry his lewd conditions :
 But the young lusty gallants he did choose
 To follow, meet to whom he might disclose
 His witless pleasance, and ill pleasing vain.
 A thousand ways he them could entertain
 With all the thriftless games that may be found ;
 With mumming and with masking all around,
 With dice, with cards, with billiards far unfit,
 With shuttlecocks, misseeming⁵ manly wit,
 With courtesans, and costly riotise,
 Whereof still somewhat to his share did rise ;
 Nor, them to pleasure, would he sometimes scorn
 A pandar's coat (so basely was he born).
 Thereto he could fine loving verses frame,
 And play the poet oft. But ah, for shame !
 Let not sweet poets' praise, whose only pride
 Is virtue to advance, and vice deride,
 Be with the work of losels' wit defam'd,
 Nor let such verses poetry be nam'd !
 Yet he the name on him would rashly take,
 Maugré⁶ the sacred Muses, and it make
 A servant to the vile affection
 Of such as he depended most upon ;
 And with the sugary sweet thereof allure
 Chaste ladies' ears to fantasies impure.

To such delights the noble wits he led
 Which him reliev'd, and their vain humours fed
 With fruitless follies and unsound delights.
 But if perhaps into their noble sprites
 Desire of honour or brave thought of arms
 Did ever creep, then with his wicked charms
 And strong conceits he would it drive away,
 Nor suffer it to house there half a day.

And whenso love of letters did inspire
 Their gentle wits, and kindle wise desire,
 That chiefly doth each noble mind adorn,
 Then he would scoff at learning, and eke scorn
 The sectaries⁷ thereof, as people base,
 And simple men, which never came in place
 Of world's affairs, but, in dark corners mew'd,
 Mutter'd of matters as their books them shew'd,
 Nor other knowledge ever did attain,
 But with their gowns their gravity maintain.
 From them he would his impudent lewd speech
 Against God's holy ministers oft reach,
 And mock divines and their profession :
 What else then did he, by progression,
 But mock high God himself, whom they profess ?
 But what car'd he for God or godliness ?
 All his care was himself how to advance,
 And to uphold his courtly countenance
 By all the cunning means he could devise ;
 Were it by honest ways, or otherwise,
 He made small choice : yet sure his honesty
 Got him small gains, but shameless flattery,
 And filthy brocade,⁸ and unseemly shifts,
 And borrow⁹ base, and some good ladies' gifts :
 But the best help, which chiefly him sustain'd
 Was his man Reynold's purchase which ho
 gain'd.

For he was school'd by kind¹⁰ in all the skill
 Of close conveyance, and each practice ill
 Of cozenage¹¹ and cleanly¹² knavery,
 Which oft maintain'd his master's bravery,¹³
 Besides, he us'd another slippery sleight,
 In taking on himself, in common sight,
 False personages fit for every stead,¹⁴
 With which he thousands cleanly¹⁵ cozen'd :
 Now like a merchant, merchants to deceive,
 With whom his credit he did often leave
 In gage for his gay master's hopeless debt :
 Now like a lawyer, when he land would let,
 Or sell fee-simples in his master's name,
 Which he had never, nor ought like the same ;
 Then would he be a broker, and draw in
 Both wares and money, by exchange to win :
 Then would he seem a farmer, that would sell
 Bargains of woods, which he did lately sell,
 Or corn, or cattle, or such other ware,
 Thereby to cozen men not well aware :
 Of all the which there came a secret fee
 To th' Ape, that he his countenance might be.

Besides all this, he us'd oft to beguile
 Poor suitors, that in Court did haunt some while :
 For he would learn their business secretly,
 And then inform his master hastily,
 That he by means might cast them to prevent,
 And beg the suit, the which the other meant.
 Or otherwise false Reynold would abuse
 The simple sutor, and wish him to choose
 His master, being one of great regard
 In Court, to compass any suit not hard,
 In case his pains were recompens'd with reason.
 So would he work the silly man by treason
 To buy his master's frivolous good will,

¹ Behaviour.² Negotiations, dealings.³ Unbecoming.⁴ Followers.⁵ Attendance at court.⁶ Increases.⁷ Despite.⁸ Pimping.⁹ Usury.¹⁰ Fraud.¹¹ Proud show.¹² Skillfully, deftly.¹³ Nature.¹⁴ Skillful.¹⁵ Situation.

That had not pow'r to do him good or ill.
 So pitiful a thing is suitor's state!
 Most miserable man, whom wicked fate
 Hath brought to court, to sue for had y-wist,¹
 That few have found, and many one hath mist!
 Full little knowest thou, that hast not tried,
 What hell it is in suing long to bide:
 To lose good days that might be better spent;
 To waste long nights in pensive discontent;
 To speed² to-day, to be put back to-morrow;
 To feed on hope; to pine with fear and sorrow;
 To have thy Prince's grace, yet want her peers';
 To have thy asking, yet wait many years;
 To fret thy soul with crosses and with cares;
 To eat thy heart through comfortless despair:
 To fawn, to crouch, to wait, to ride, to run,
 To spend, to give, to want, to be undone.
 Unhappy wight, born to disastrous end,
 That doth his life in so long tendance spend!

Who ever leaves sweet home, where mean
 estate,
 In safe assurance, without strife or hate,
 Finds all things needful for contentment meek;
 And will to Court for shadows vain to seek,
 Or hope to gain, himself will a daw try:³
 That curse God send unto mine enemy!
 For none but such as this bold Ape unblest
 Can ever thrive in that unlucky quest;
 Or such as hath a Reynold to his man,
 That by his shifts his master furnish can.
 But yet this Fox could not so closely hide
 His crafty feats, but that they were descried
 At length by such as sat in justice' seat,
 Who for the same him foully did entreat;
 And, having worthily him punished,
 Out of the Court for ever banished.
 And now the Ape, wanting his huckster man,
 That wont provide his necessities, gan
 To grow into great lack, nor could uphold
 His countenance in those his garments old;
 Nor new ones could he easily provide,
 Though all men him uncased gan deride,
 Like as a puppet placed in a play,
 Whose part once past, all men bid take away:
 So that he driven was to great distress,
 And shortly brought to hopeless wretchedness.
 Then closely⁴ as he might he cast to leave
 The Court, not asking any pass or leave;
 But ran away in his rent rags by night,
 Nor ever stay'd in place, nor spake to wight,
 Till that the Fox his cope-mate⁵ he had found,
 To whom complaining his unhappy stound,⁶
 At last again with him in travel join'd,
 And with him far'd some better chance to find.

So in the world long time they wandered,
 And mickle want and hardness suffered;
 That them repented much so foolishly
 To come so far to seek for misery,
 And leave the sweetness of contented home,
 Though eating hips,⁷ and drinking watery foam.
 Thus as they them complain'd to and fro,

¹ To see in vain expectation of a benefit which will be only a subject of vain regret—or of continual declarations that "had I wist" (if I had known all that I know now), "I would never have entered on the useless pursuit."

² To seem to succeed.

Whilst through the forest reckless they did go,
 Lo! where they spied how, in a gloomy glade,
 The Lion sleeping lay in secret shade,
 His crown and sceptre lying him beside,
 And having doff'd for heat his dreadful hide:
 Which when they saw, the Ape was sore afraid,
 And would have fled, with terror all dismay'd.
 But him the Fox with hardy words did stay,
 And bade him put all cowardice away;
 For now was time (if ever they would hope)
 To aim their counsels to the fairest scope,
 And them for ever highly to advance,
 In case the good, which their own happy chance
 Them freely offer'd, they would wisely take.
 Scarce could the Ape yet speak, so did he quake;
 Yet, as he could, he ask'd how good might grow
 Where naught but dread and death do seem in show.

"Now," said he, "while the Lion sleepeth sound,
 May we his crown and mace take from the ground,

And eke his skin, the terror of the wood,
 Wherewith we may ourselves (if we think good),
 Make kings of beasts, and lords of forests all,
 Subject unto that power imperial."

"Ah! but," said th' Ape, "who is so bold a wretch,

That dare his hardy hand to those outstretch,
 When as he knows his meed, if he be spied,
 To be a thousand deaths, and shame beside?"

"Fond⁸ Ape!" said then the Fox, "into whose breast

Never crept thought of honour nor brave geat,⁹
 Who will not venture life a king to be,
 And rather rule and reign in sov'reign see!¹⁰
 Than dwell in dust inglorious and base,
 Where none shall name the number of his place?
 One joyous hour in blissful happiness,
 I choose before a life of wretchedness.
 Be therefore counselld herein by me,
 And shake off this vile-hearted cowardry.
 If he awake, yet is not death the next,
 For we may colour it with some pretext
 Of this, or that, that may excuse the crime:
 Else we may fly; thou to a tree may'st climb,
 And I creep under ground, both from his reach:
 Therefore be rul'd to do as I do teach."

The Ape, that erst¹¹ did naught but chill and quake,

Now gan some courage unto him to take,
 And was content t' attempt that enterprise,
 Tickled with glory and rash covetise.
 But first gan question, whether¹² should essay
 Those royal ornaments to steal away?

"Marry, that shall yourself," quoth he thereto,
 "For ye be fine and nimble it to do;
 Of all the beasts which in the forests be,
 Is not a fitter for this turn than ye:
 Therefore, mine own dear brother, take good heart,

³ Will prove or discover himself to be a daw, a fool.

⁴ Secretly.

⁶ Plight, disaster.

⁸ Foolish.

¹⁰ Sent.

¹² Which of the two.

⁵ Comrade.

⁷ Dog-berries.

⁹ Achievment.

¹¹ But a little ago.

At last he came unto his mansion,
 Where all the gates he found fast lock'd anon,
 And many warders round about them stood :
 With that he roar'd aloud, as he were wood,¹
 That all the palace quak'd at the stound,²
 As if it quite were riven from the ground,
 And all within were dead and heartless left ;
 And th' Ape himself, as one whose wits were reft,
 Flew here and there, and ev'ry corner sought,
 To hide himself from his own fear'd thought.
 But the false Fox, when he the Lion heard,
 Flew closely forth, straightway of death afear'd,
 And to the Lion came, full lowly creeping,
 With feign'd face, and waterye half weeping,
 T' excuse his former treason and abusion,
 And turning all unto the Ape's confusion :
 Nathless the Royal Beast forbore believing,
 But bade him stay at ease till farther proving.³
 Then, when he saw no entrance to him granted,
 Boaring yet louder, that all hearts it daunted,
 Upon those gates with force he fiercely flew,

And, rending them in pieces, felly slew
 Those warders strange, and all that else he met.
 But th' Ape, still flying, he nowhere might get :
 From room to room, from beam to beam, he fled,
 All breathless, and for fear now almost dead :
 Yet him at last the Lion spied, and caught,
 And forth with shame unto his judgment
 brought.

Then all the beasts he caus'd assembled be,
 To hear their doom, and sad ensample see :
 The Fox, first author of that treachery,
 He did uncase, and then away let fly.
 But th' Ape's long tail (which then he had) he
 quite

Out off, and both ears par'd of their height ;
 Since which, all apes but half their ears have left,
 And of their tails are utterly bereft.

So Mother Hubbard her discourse did end :
 Which pardon me, if I amiss have penn'd ;
 For weak was my remembrance it to hold,
 And bad her tongue that it so bluntly told.

MUIOPOTMOS ;

OR,

THE FATE OF THE BUTTERFLY.

[1590.]

DEDICATION

TO THE RIGHT WORTHY AND VIRTUOUS LADY,

THE LADY CAREY.⁴

MOST brave and bountiful Lady ; for so excellent favours as I have received at your sweet hands, to offer these few leaves as in recompense, should be as to offer flowers to the gods for their divine benefits. Therefore I have determined to give myself wholly to you, as quite abandoned from myself, and absolutely vowed to your services : which in all right is ever held for full recompense of debt or damage, to have the person yielded. My person I wot well how little worth it is. But the faithful mind and humble zeal which I bear unto your Ladyship may perhaps be more of price, as may please you to account and use the poor service thereof ; which taketh glory to advance your excellent parts and noble virtues, and to spend itself in

honouring you ; not so much for your great bounty to myself, which yet may not be unminded ; nor for name or kindred's sake by you vouchsafed, being also regardable ; as for that honourable name, which ye have by your brave deserts purchased to yourself, and spread in the mouths of all men : with which I have also presumed to grace my verses, and, under your name, to commend to the world this small Poem. The which beseeching your Ladyship to take in worth, and of all things therein according to your wonted graciousness to make a mild construction, I humbly pray for your happiness.

Your Ladyship's ever humbly,

E. S.

I SING of deadly dolorous debate,
 Stirr'd up through wrathful Nemeses' despite,
 Betwixt two mighty ones of great estate,⁵

¹ Mad.

² Proving, testing, of his story.

³ Alarm.

⁴ Second daughter of Sir John Spencer of Althorpe ; her husband, Sir George Carey, became Lord Hunsdon by the death of his father in 1596. She is believed to be the same with "Lady Carew," to whom the poet addressed one of the commendatory sonnets prefixed to "The Faerie Queen ;" page 810.

⁵ It is probable that this poem allegorises some actual event or court episode of Spenser's day ; but all clue to the real occasion is lost. Mr Craik, after quoting the two opening stanzas, pronounces the opinion that "the narrative thus solemnly introduced can hardly be a mere story of a spider and a fly ;" and the singularly personal character that pervades the poetry of Spenser powerfully countenances the opinion.

Amongst the rest a gentle nymph was found,
Hight Asterie, excelling all the crew
In courteous usage and unstained hue.

Who, being nimble jointed than the rest,
And more industrious, gather'd more store
Of the fields' honour than the others best ;
Which they in secret hearts envying sore,
Told Venus, when her as the worthiest
She prais'd, that Cupid (as they heard before)
Did lend her secret aid, in gathering
Into her lap the children of the Spring.

Whereof the goddess gath'ring jealous fear—
Not yet unmindful how not long ago
Her son to Psyche secret love did bear,
And long it close conceal'd, till mickle woe
Thereof arose, and many a rueful tear,—
Reason with sudden rage did overgo ;
And, giving hasty credit to th' accuser,
Was led away of them that did abuse her.

Eftsoons that damsel, by her heav'nly might,
She turn'd into a wing'd butterfly,
In the wide air to make her wand'ring flight ;
And all those flow'rs, with which so plenteously
Her lap she fill'd had, that bred her spite,
She plac'd in her wings, for memory
Of her pretended crime, though crime none were :
Since which that fly them in her wings doth bear.

Thus the fresh Clarion, being ready light,
Unto his journey did himself address,
And with good speed began to take his flight :
Over the fields, in his frank lustiness,
And all the champaign o'er, he soar'd light ;
And all the country wide he did possess,
Feeding upon their pleasures bounteously,
That none gainsaid, nor none did him envy.

The woods, the rivers, and the meadows green,
With his air-cutting wings he measur'd wide ;
Nor did he leave the mountains bare unseen,
Nor the rank grassy fens' delights untried.
But none of these, however sweet they be'n,
Might please his fancy, nor him cause t' abide :
His choiceful sense with ev'ry change doth flit ;
No common things may please a wavering wit.

To the gay gardens his unstaid desire
Him wholly carried, to refresh his sprites :
There lavish Nature, in her best attire,
Pours forth sweet odours and alluring sights ;
And Art, with her contending, doth aspire
T' excel the natural with made delights :
And all, that fair or pleasant may be found,
In riotous excess doth there abound.

There he arriving, round about doth fly,
From bed to bed, from one to other border ;
And takes survey, with curious busy eye,
Of ev'ry flow'r and herb there set in order ;
Now this, now that, he tasteth tenderly ;
Yet none of them he rudely doth disorder,
Nor with his feet their silken leaves deface ;
But pastures on the pleasures of each place.

And evermore, with most variety
And change of sweetness (for all change is sweet),

He casts¹ his glutton sense to satisfy ;
Now sucking of the sap of herb most meet,
Or of the dew which yet on them does lie ;
Now in the same bathing his tender feet :
And then he percheth on some branch thereby,
To weather him, and his moist wings to dry.

And then again he turneth to his play,
To spoil the pleasures of that Paradise ;
The wholesome saulge,² and lavender still gray,
Rank-smelling rue, and cummin good for eyes,
The roses reigning in the pride of May,
Sharp hyssop good for green wounds' remedies,
Fair marigolds, and bees-alluring thyme,
Sweet marjoram, and daisies decking Prime :³

Cool violets, and orpine growing still,
Embath'd balm, and cheerful galingale,
Fresh costmary, and breathful camomill,
Dull poppy, and drink-quick'ning setuale,
Vein-healing vervain, and head-purging dill,
Sound savory, and basil hearty-hale,
Fat colworts, and comforting periseline,
Cold lettuce, and refreshing rosmarine.

And whatso else of virtue good or ill
Grew in this garden, fetch'd from far away,
Of ev'ry one he takes, and tastes at will,
And on their pleasures greedily doth prey.
Then when he hath both play'd, and fed his fill,
In the warm sun he doth himself embay,⁴
And there him rests in riotous suffiance⁵
Of all his gladfulness, and kingly joyance.

What more felicity can fall to creature
Than to enjoy delight with liberty,
And to be lord of all the works of Nature,
To reign in th' air from th' earth to highest sky,
To feed on flow'rs and weeds of glorious feature,
To take whatever thing doth please the eye ?
Who rests not pleas'd with such happiness,
Well worthy he to taste of wretchedness !

But what on earth can long abide in state ?
Or who can him assure of happy day ?
Since morning fair may bring foul ev'ning late,
And least mishap the most bliss alter may !
For thousand perils lie in close await
About us dally to work our decay ;
That none, except a god, or God him guide,
May them avoid, or remedy provide.

And whatso heavens in their secret doom
Ordain'd have, how can frail fleshly wight
Forecast but it must needs to issue come ?
The sea, the air, the fire, the day, the night,
And th' armies of their creatures all and some,
Do serve to them, and with impudence might
War against us, the vassals of their will.
Who then can save what they dispose to spill ?⁶

Not thou, O Clarion, though fairest thou
Of all thy kind, unhappy happy Fly,
Whose cruel fate is woven even now
Of Jove's own hand, to work thy misery !
Nor may thee help the many hearty vow
Which thine old sire, with sacred piety,

¹ Contrives.² Sage.³ Spring.⁴ Bathe, bask.⁵ Contentment.⁶ Destroy.

And by her silence, sign of one dismay'd,
The victory did yield her as her share ;
Yet did she inly fret and felly burn,
And all her blood to poisonous rancour turn :
That shortly, from the shape of womanhead,
Such as she was when Pallas she attempted,¹
She grew to hideous shape of drearhead,²
Pin'd with grief of folly late repented :
Eftsoons her white straight legs were alter'd
To crooked crawling shanks, of marrow empti'd ;
And her fair face to foul and loathsome hue,
And her fine corse t' a bag of venom grew.

This curs'd creature,³ mindful of that old
Enfested grudge, the which his mother felt,
So soon as Clarion he did behold,
His heart with vengeful malice inly swelt ;
And, weaving straight a net with many a fold
About the cave in which he lurking dwelt,
With fine small cords about it stretch'd wide,
So finely spun, that scarce they could be spied.

Nor any damsel, which her vaunteth most
In skilful knitting of soft silken twine ;
Nor any weaver, which his work doth boast
In diaper, in damask, or in line ;⁴
Nor any skill'd in workmanship embost ;
Nor any skill'd in loops of fingering fine ;
Might in their divers cunning ever dare
With this so curious network to compare.

Nor do I think that that same subtle gin,
The which the Lemnian god fram'd craftily,
Mars sleeping with his wife to compass in,⁵—
That all the gods with common mockery
Might laugh at them, and scorn their shameful
sin,—

Was like to this. This same he did apply
For to entrap the careless Clarion,
That rang'd eachwhere without suspicion.

Suspicion of friend, nor fear of foe,
That hazarded his health, had he at all,
But walk'd at will, and wander'd to and fro,
In the pride of his freedom principal :
Little wist he his fatal future woe,
But was secure ; the liker he to fall.
He likeliest is to fall into mischance,
That is regardless of his governance.

Yet still Aragnoll (so his foe was hight)
Lay lurking covertly him to surprise ;
And all his gins,⁶ that him entangle might,
Dress'd in good order as he could devise.
At length the foolish Fly, without foresight,
As he that did all danger quite despise,

Toward those parts came flying carelessly,
Where hidden was his hateful enemy.

Who, seeing him, with secret joy therefor
Did tickle inwardly in ev'ry vein ;
And his false heart, fraught with all treason's
store,

Was fill'd with hope his purpose to obtain :
Himself he close upgather'd more and more
Into his den, that his deceitful train⁷
By his there being might not be bewray'd ;
Nor any noise nor any motion made.

Like as a wily fox, that, having spied
Where on a sunny bank the lambs do play,
Full closely creeping by the hinder side,
Lies in ambushment of his hop'd prey,
Nor stirreth limb ; till, seeing ready tide,⁸
He rusheth forth, and snatcheth quite away
One of the little younglings unawares :
So to his work Aragnoll him prepares.

Who now shall give unto my heavy eyes
A well of tears, that all may overflow ?
Or where shall I find lamentable cries
And mournful tunes enough my grief to show ?
Help, O thou Tragic Muse ! me to devise
Notes sad enough t' express this bitter throes :
For lo ! the dreary stound⁹ is now arriv'd,
That of all happiness hath us depriv'd.

The luckless Clarion, whether cruel Fate
Or wicked Fortune faultless¹⁰ him misled,
Or some ungracious blast, out of the gate
Of Æole's reign, perforce him drove on head,¹¹
Was (O sad hap ! and hour unfortunate !)
With violent swift flight forth carri'd
Into the curs'd cobweb, which his foe
Had fram'd for his final overthrow.

There the fond Fly entangled, struggled long
Himself to free thereout ; but all in vain.
For, striving more, the more in laces strong
Himself he tied, and wrapt his wings twain
In limy snares the subtle loops among ;
That in the end he breathless did remain,
And, all his youthly forces idly spent,
Him to the mercy of th' avenger lent.

Which when the grisly tyrant did espy,
Like a grim lion rushing with fierce might
Out of his den, he seiz'd greedily
On the resistless prey ; and, with fell spite,
Under the left wing struck his weapon aly
Into his heart, that his deep-groaning sprite
In bloody streams forth fled into the air,
His body left the spectacle of care.

¹ Challenged, assailed.

² Wretchedness, terror.

³ Aragnoll.

⁴ Linnen.

⁵ See note 18, page 40 ; and note 31, page 201.

⁶ Engines, crafty contrivances.

⁷ Stratagem

⁸ The appropriate moment.

⁹ Hour.

¹⁰ Without any blame of his.

¹¹ Forward, ahead

Keeping my sheep amongst the coolly shade
Of the green alders by the Mulla's¹ shore :
There a strange shepherd chanc'd to find me out,
Whether allur'd with my pipe's delight,
Whose pleasing sound y-shrill'd far about,
Or thither led by chance, I know not right :
Whom when I ask'd from what place he came,
And how he hight, himself he did y-clepe²
The Shepherd of the Ocean³ by name,
And said he came far from the main-sea deep.
He, sitting me beside in that same shade,
Provok'd me to play some pleasant fit ;⁴
And, when he heard the music which I made,
He found himself full greatly pleas'd at it :
Yet, smul'ng⁵ my pipe, he took in hand
My pipe, before that smul'd of many,
And play'd thereon (for well that skill he
conn'd⁶) ;

Himself as skilful in that art as any.
He pip'd, I sung ; and when he sung, I pip'd ;
By change of turns, each making other merry ;
Neither envying other, nor envied,
So pip'd we, until we both were weary."

There interrupting him, a bonny swain,
That Cuddy hight, him thus atween bespake :
" And should it not thy ready course restrain,
I would request thee, Colin, for my sake,
To tell what thou didst sing when he did play ;
For well, I ween, it worth recounting was,
Whether it were some hymn, or moral lay,
Or carol made to praise thy lov'd lass."

" Nor of my love, nor of my lass," quoth he
" I then did sing, as then occasion fell :
For love had me forlorn, forlorn of me,
That made me in that desert choose to dwell.
But of my river Bregog's⁷ love I sung,
Which to the shiny Mulla he did bear,
And yet doth bear, and ever will, so long
As water doth within his banks appear."

" Of fellowship," said then that bonny boy,
" Record to us that lovely lay again :
The stay whereof⁸ shall naught these ears annoy,
Who all that Colin makes do covet fain."

" Hear, then," quoth he, " the tenor of my tale,
In sort as I it to that shepherd told :
No leasing⁹ new, nor grandam's fable stale,
But ancient truth confirm'd with credence old."

" Old Father Mole (Mole hight that mountain
gray

That walls the north side of Armulla dale),
He had a daughter fresh as flow'r of May,
Which gave that name unto that pleasant vale ;
Mulla, the daughter of old Mole, so hight
The Nymph which of that water-course has
charge,

That, springing out of Mole, doth run down right

To Buttevant, where, spreading forth at large,
It giveth name unto that ancient city
Which Kilnemullah call'd is of old ;
Whose ragged ruins breed great ruth and pity
To travellers which it from far behold.
Full fain she lov'd, and was belov'd full fain
Of her own brother river, Bregog hight ;
So hight because of this deceitful train
Which he with Mulla wrought to win delight.
But her old sire, more careful of her good,
And meaning her much better to prefer,
Did think to match her with the neighbour flood,
Which Allo¹⁰ hight, Broadwater call'd far ;
And wrought so well with his continual pain,
That he that river for his daughter won :
The dower agreed, the day assign'd plain,
The place appointed where it should be done.
Nathless the Nymph her former liking held ;
For love will not be drawn, but must be led ;
And Bregog did so well her fancy weld,¹¹
That her good will he got her first to wed.
But for¹² her father, sitting still on high,
Did warily still watch which way she went,
And eke from far observ'd, with jealous eye,
Which way his course the wanton Bregog bent ;
Him to deceive, for all his watchful ward,
The wily lover did devise this sleight :
First into many parts his stream he shar'd,¹³
That, whilst the one was watch'd, the other
might

Pass unespied to meet her by the way ;
And then, besides, those little streams so broken
He under ground so closely¹⁴ did convey,
That of their passage doth appear no token,
Till they into the Mulla's water slide.

So secretly did he his love enjoy :
Yet not so secret, but it was descried,
And told her father by a shepherd's boy.
Who, wondrous wroth for that so foul despite,
In great revenge did roll down from his hill
Huge mighty stones, the which encumber might
His passage, and his water courses spill.¹⁵
So of¹⁶ a river, which he was of old,
He none was made, but scatter'd all to naught ;
And, lost among those rocks into him roll'd,
Did lose his name : so dear his love he bought."

Which having said, him Thestylis bespake ;
" Now, by my life, this was a merry lay,
Worthy of Colin's self that did it make.
But read¹⁷ now eke, of friendship I thee pray,
What ditty did that other shepherd sing :
For I do covet most the same to hear,
As men use most to covet foreign thing."

" That shall I eke," quoth he, " to you de-
clare :

His song was all a lamentable lay

¹ The river Awbeg, which Spenser poetically called Mulla, after the mountain in which it had its source. See note 18, page 477.

² Call.

³ Sir Walter Raleigh ; who visited Spenser at Kill-colman in the latter part of 1589 ; and with whom the poet—bearing in manuscript and ready for the press the first three books of "The Faerie Queen"—proceeded to England before the close of the same year.

⁴ Strain.

⁵ Emulating.

⁶ Knew.

⁷ The Irish name of the river means "false" or "sly," the stream, which rises in the Ballyhoura Hills, runs for some distance under ground.

⁸ The delay caused by the recital of which.

⁹ Falsehood.

¹⁰ Among the Irish rivers enumerated in canto xi, book iv., of "The Faerie Queen" (page 477), as attending the marriage of the Thames and the Medway, are—

" Strong Allo tumbling from Slieveagher steep,
And Mulla mine, whose waves I willom taught to weep."

¹¹ Wield, govern.

¹² Divided.

¹³ From being.

¹⁴ Secretly.

¹⁵ Because.

¹⁶ Spoil.

¹⁷ Tell.

And round about with mighty white rocks
hem'd,
Against the sea's encroaching cruelty.
Those same, the shepherd told me, were the
fields

In which Dame Cynthia her land-herds fed ;
Fair goodly fields, than which Armulla yields
None fairer, nor more fruitful to be read.¹
The first, to which we nigh approach'd, was
A high headland² thrust far into the sea,
Like to a horn, whereof the name it has,
Yet seem'd to be a goodly pleasant lea :
There did a lofty mount at first us greet,
Which did a stately heap of stones uprear,
That seem'd amid the surges for to fleet,³
Much greater than that frame which us did bear :
There did our ship her fruitful womb unlade,
And put us all ashore on Cynthia's land."

"What land is that thou mean'st," then
Cuddy said,
"And is there other than whereon we stand ?"
"Ah ! Cuddy," then quoth Colin, "thou's a
fon,"⁴

Thou hast not seen least part of Nature's work :
Much more there is unken'd⁵ than thou dost
con,"⁶

And much more that does from men's know-
ledge lurk.

For that same land much larger is than this,
And other men and beasts and birds doth feed :
There fruitful corn, fair trees, fresh herbage is,
And all things else that living creatures need.
Besides, most goodly rivers there appear,
No whit inferior to thy Fanchin's praise,
Or unto Allo, or to Mulla clear :

Naught hast thou, foolish boy, seen in thy days."

"But if that land be there," quoth he, "as
here,

And is their heaven likewise there all one ?
And, if like heav'n, be heav'nly graces there,
Like as in this same world where we do won ?"⁷

"Both heav'n and heav'nly graces do much
more,"

Quoth he, "abound in that same land than
this.

For there all happy peace and plenteous store
Conspire in one to make contented bliss :
No waiving there nor wretchedness is heard,
No bloody issues nor no leprosies,
No grisly famine, nor no raging sword,⁸
No nightly bordrags,⁹ nor no hue and cries ;
The shepherds there abroad may safely lie,
On hills and downs, withouten dread or danger :
No ravenous wolves the goodman's hope destroy,
Nor outlaws fell affray the forest ranger.
There learn'd arts do flourish in great honour,
And poets' wits are had in peerless price :
Religion hath lay power to rest upon her,¹⁰
Advancing virtue and suppressing vice.

¹ Discovered.

² Cornwall ; Latin, "cornu," a horn.

³ Float.

⁴ "Thou art a fool." "Ill' hall, Alain, by God, thou
is a fonne"—or "fon"—is a line in Chaucer's *Reeve's
Tale* ; page 57.

⁷ Dwell.

⁸ Unknown.

⁶ Know.

⁹ Dwell.

⁸ Sword.

⁹ Border forays.

¹⁰ The lay or civil power is based upon, supported by,
religion.

For end,¹¹ all good, all grace there freely grows,
Had people grace it gratefully to use :

For God his gifts there plenteously bestows,
But graceless men them greatly do abuse."

"But say on farther," then said Corylas,
"The rest of thine adventures, that betided."

"Forth on our voyage we by land did pass,"

Quoth he, "as that same shepherd still us guided,

Until that we to Cynthia's presence came :

Whose glory, greater than my simple thought,

I found much greater than the former fame ;

Such greatness I can not compare to aught :

But if I her like aught on earth might read,¹²

I would her liken to a crown of lilies

Upon a virgin bride's adorn'd head,

With roses dight¹³ and golds¹⁴ and daffodillies ;

Or like the circlet of a turtle true,

In which all colours of the rainbow be ;

Or like fair Phoebe's garland shining new,

In which all pure perfection one may see.

But vain it is to think, by paragon¹⁵

Of earthly things, to judge of things divine :

Her pow'r, her mercy, and her wisdom, none

Can deem,¹⁶ but who the Godhead can define.

Why then do I, base shepherd, bold and blind,

Presume the things so sacred to profane ?

More fit it is t'adore, with humble mind,

The image of the heav'n in shape humane."

With that Alexis broke his tale asunder,

Saying ; "By wond'ring at thy Cynthia's praise,

Colin, thyself thou mak'st us more to wonder,

And, her upraising, dost thyself upraise.

But let us hear what grace she shew'd thee,

And how that shepherd strange thy cause ad-
van'd."

"The Shepherd of the Ocean," quoth he,

"Unto that Goddess' grace me first enhanc'd,

And to mine oaten pipe inclin'd her ear,

That she thenceforth therein gan take delight,

And it desir'd at timely hours to hear,

All¹⁷ were my notes but rude and roughly dight ;

For not by measure of her own great mind,

And wondrous worth, she mote¹⁸ my simple song.

But joy'd that country shepherd aught could find

Worth hearkening to amongst the learn'd
throng."

"Why?" said Alexis then, "what needeth also

That is so great a shepherdess herself,

And hath so many shepherds in her fee,

To hear thee sing, a simple silly elf ?

Or be the shepherds which do serve her lady,

That they list not their merry pipes apply ?

Or be their pipes untunable and crasy,

That they can not her honour worthily ?"

"Ah ! nay," said Colin, "neither so, nor so :

For better shepherds be not under sky,

Nor better able, when they list to blow

Their pipes aloud, her name to glorify.

There is good Harpalus,¹⁹ now waxen ag'd

11 To sum up ; in fine.

12 Declare.

13 Marigolds.

14 Estimate.

15 Meted, judged.

16 Barnaby Googe, a retainer of Cecil's, who published
in 1563 a collection of "Elogues, Epitaphs, and Son-
nets."

17 Deeked.

18 Comparison.

19 Although.

Whom thou dost so enforce¹ to deify:
That woods, and hills, and valleys thou hast
made

Her name to echo unto heaven high.
But say, who else vouchsafed thee of grace?"

"They all," quoth he, "me gracèd goodly well,
That all I praise; but, in the highest place,
Urania,² sister unto Astrophel,
In whose brave mind, as in a golden coffer,
All heav'nly gifts and riches lockèd are;
More rich than pearls of Ind, or gold of Ophir,
And in her sex more wonderful and rare.
Nor less praiseworthy I Theana,³ read,⁴
Whose goodly beams, though they be overdight,⁵
With mourning stole of careful widowhead,
Yet through that darksome veil do glisten
bright;

She is the well of bounty and brave mind,
Excelling most in glory and great light:
She is the ornament of womankind,
And Court's chief garland, with all virtues dight.
Therefore great Cynthia her in chiefest grace
Doth hold, and next unto herself advance,
Well worthy of so honourable place,
For her great worth and noble governance.
Nor less praiseworthy is her sister dear,
Fair Marian,⁶ the Muses' only darling:
Whose beauty shineth as the morning clear,
With silver dew upon the roses pearling.
Nor less praiseworthy is Manilla,⁷
Best known by bearing up great Cynthia's train:
That same is she to whom Daphnaïda
Upon her niece's death I did complain:
She is the pattern of true womanhead,
And only mirror of femininity:
Worthy next after Cynthia to tread,
As she is next her in nobility.
Nor less praiseworthy Galathea seems
Than best of all that honourable crew,
Fair Galathea with bright shining beams,
Inflaming feeble eyes that her do view.
She there then waited upon Cynthia,
Yet there is not her won;⁸ but here with us,
About the borders of our rich Coshma,
Now made of Maa the nymph delicious.
Nor less praiseworthy fair Nessera is,
Nessera ours, not theirs, though there she be;
For of the famous Shure the nymph she is,
For high desert advanc'd to that degree.

¹ Endeavour.

² Mary, Countess of Pembroke, sister of Sir Philip Sidney; to whom Spenser dedicated "The Ruins of Time," and addressed one of the commendatory sonnets prefixed to "The Faerie Queen;" page 309.

³ Anna, widow of Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick, whom the poet has also eulogised in "The Ruins of Time" (page 385).

⁴ Declare, consider.

⁵ Covered over, veiled.

⁶ Margaret, Countess of Cumberland.

⁷ Helena, Marchioness of Northampton, to whom Spenser dedicated his "Daphnaïda."

⁸ Dwelling.

⁹ Lady Penelope Devereux, daughter of the Earl of Essex, whom Sir Philip Sidney celebrated in his "Arcadia" under the name of "Philoclea," and under that of "Stella" in his poems of Astrophel; she had married Lord Rich, but was at this time a widow.

¹⁰ Three of the six daughters of Sir John Spencer of Althorpe, from whom sprang the noble houses of Spencer and Marlborough. Phyllis represents Eliza-

She is the blossom of grace and courtesy,
Adornèd with all honourable parts:
She is the branch of true nobility,
Belov'd of high and low with faithful hearts.
Nor less praiseworthy Stella⁹ do I read,
Though naught my praises of her needed are,
Whom verse of noblest shepherd lately dead
Hath prais'd and rais'd above each other star.
Nor less praiseworthy are the sisters three,
The honour of the noble family
Of which I meanest boast myself to be,
And most that unto them I am so high:
Phyllis, Charyllis, and sweet Amaryllis,¹⁰
Phyllis, the fair, is eldest of the three:
The next to her is bountiful Charyllis:
But th' youngest is the highest in degree.
Phyllis, the flower of rare perfection,
Fair spreading forth her leaves with fresh de-
light,

That, with their beauty's amorous reflexion,
Bereave of sense each rash beholder's sight.
But sweet Charyllis is the paragon
Of peerless price, and ornament of praise,
Admir'd of all, yet envied of none,
Through the mild temperance of her goodly rays.
Thrice happy do I hold thee, noble swain,
The which art of so rich a spoil possesser,
And, it embracing dear without disdain,
Hast sole possession in so chaste a breast:
Of all the shepherds' daughters which there be,
And yet there be the fairest under sky,
Or that elsewhere I ever yet did see,
A fairer nymph yet never saw mine eye;
She is the pride and primrose of the rest,
Made by the Maker's self to be admired;
And like a goodly beacon high address'd,¹¹
That is with sparks of heav'nly beauty fired.
But Amaryllis,—whether fortunate,
Or else unfortunate, may I read,¹²
That freed is from Cupid's yoke by fate,
Since which she doth new bands' adventure
dread?

Shepherd, whatever thou hast heard to be
In this or that prais'd diversely apart,
In her thou may'st them all assembled see,
And seal'd up in the treasure of her heart.
Nor thee less worthy, gentle Flavia,
For thy chaste life and virtue I esteem:
Nor thee less worthy, courteous Candida,¹³

beth, the second daughter, who married Sir George Carey, the son of Lord Hunsdon—to which title he succeeded in 1596; Spenser addressed to her one of the commendatory sonnets prefixed to "The Faerie Queen," and dedicated to her "Molopotmos." Charyllis is Anne, the fifth daughter, who successively married Lord Mounteagle, Lord Compton, and Lord Buckhurst (Earl of Dorset in 1608); to her was dedicated "Mother Hubbard's Tale." Amaryllis is the sixth and youngest daughter, Alice, to whom—as Lady Strange—the poet inscribed "The Tears of the Muse," and who was now the widowed Countess of Derby, Lord Strange having succeeded to the earldom in 1592, and died two years afterwards. Not merely in the lines in the text, but in all the three dedications which have been mentioned, does the poet advance his claim to kindred with the high-connected Spencers.

¹¹ Placed, prepared.

¹² Pronounce.

¹³ Of Galathea, Nessera, Flavia, and Candida, nothing is known farther than that the first two were Irish ladies.

For thy true love and loyalty I deem.
Besides yet many more that Cynthia serve,
Right noble nymphs, and high to be commended :
But, if I all should praise as they deserve,
This sun would fail me ere I half had ended.
Therefore, in closure¹ of a thankful mind,
I deem it best to hold eternally
Their bounteous deeds and noble favours shrin'd,
Than by discourse them to indignify."

So having said, Aglaure him bespake :
"Colin, well worthy were those goodly favours
Bestow'd on thee, that so of them dost make,
And them requitest with thy thankful labours.
But of great Cynthia's goodness, and high grace,
Finish the story which thou hast begun."

"More eath,"² quoth he, "it is in such a case
How to begin, than know how to have done.
For ev'ry gift, and ev'ry goodly meed,
Which she on me bestow'd, demands a day ;
And ev'ry day, in which she did a deed,
Demands a year it duly to display.

Her words were like a stream of honey fleeting,³
The which doth softly trickle from the hive,
Able to melt the hearer's heart unweeting,⁴
And eke to make the dead again alive.
Her deeds were like great clusters of ripe grapes,
Which load the branches of the fruitful vine ;
Off'ring to fall into each mouth that gapes,
And fill the same with store of timely wine.
Her looks were like beams of the morning sun,
Forth looking through the windows of the east,
When first the fleecy cattle have begun
Upon the pearl'd grass to make their feast.
Her thoughts are like the fume of frankincense,
Which from a golden censer forth doth rise,
And, throwing forth sweet odours, mounts from
thence

In rolling globes up to the vaulted skies.
There she beholds, with high aspiring thought,
The cradle of her own creation,
Amongst the seats of angels heav'nly wrought,
Much like an angel in all form and fashion."

"Colin," said Cuddy then, "thou hast forgot
Thyself, me seems, too much, to mount so high :
Such lofty flight base shepherd seemeth not,⁵
From flocks and fields to angels and to sky."

"True," answer'd he, "but her great excel-
lence

Lifts me above the measure of my might :
That, being fill'd with furious insolence,
I feel myself like one y-rapt in sprite.
For when I think of her, as oft I ought,
Then want I words to speak it fitly forth :
And, when I speak of her what I have thought,
I cannot think according to her worth.
Yet will I think of her, yet will I speak,
So long as life my limbs doth hold together ;
And, when as death these vital bands shall
break,

Her name recorded I will leave for ever.
Her name in ev'ry tree I will endorse,
That, as the trees do grow, her name may grow :
And in the ground eachwhere will it engross,⁶

¹ Within the enclosure.

² Easy.

⁴ Unconsciously.

³ Flowing.

⁵ Beseems not lowly shepherd.

And fill with stones, that all men may it know.
The speaking woods, and murmuring waters'
fall,

Her name I'll teach in knownen terms to frame :
And eke my lambs, when for their dams they
call,

I'll teach to call for Cynthia by name.
And, long while after I am dead and rotten,
Amongst the shepherds' daughters dancing
round,

My lays made of her shall not be forgotten,
But sung by them with flow'ry garlands crown'd.
And ye, whose ye be, that shall survive,
When as ye hear her memory renew'd,
Be witness of her bounty here alive,
Which she to Colin her poor shepherd shew'd."

Much was the whole assembly of those herds
Mov'd at his speech, so feelingly he spake :
And stood a while astonish'd at his words,
Till Thestylis at last their silence brake,
Saying ; "Why, Colin, since thou found'st such
grace

With Cynthia and all her noble crew,
Why didst thou ever leave that happy place,
In which such wealth might unto thee accrue,
And back return'dst to this barren soil,
Where cold and care and penury do dwell,
Here to keep sheep with hunger and with toil?
Most wretched he, that is, and cannot tell."

"Happy indeed," said Colin, "I him hold,
That may that bless'd presence still enjoy,
Of fortune and of envy uncontroll'd,
Which still are wont most happy states t' annoy :
But I, by that which little while I prov'd,
Some part of those enormities did see
The which in Court continually hov'd,⁷
And follow'd those which happy seem'd to be.
Therefore I, silly man, whose former days
Had in rude fields been altogether spent,
Durst not adventure such unknownen ways,
Nor trust the guile of Fortune's blandishment ;
But rather chose back to my sheep to turn,
Whose utmost hardness I before had tried,
Than, having learn'd repentance late, to mourn
Amongst those wretches which I there descried."
"Shepherd," said Thestylis, "it seems of spite
Thou speakest thus 'gainst their felicity,
Which thou enviest, rather than of right
That aught in them blameworthy thou dost
spy."

"Cause have I none," quoth he, "of canker'd
will
To quite⁸ them ill that me demean'd so well :⁹
But self-regard of private good or ill
Moves me of each, so as I found, to tell,
And eke to warn young shepherds' wand'ring
wit,
Which, through report of that life's painted
bliss,

Abandon quiet home to seek for it,
And leave their lambs, to loss mislead amiss.
For, sooth to say, it is no sort of life
For shepherd fit to lead in that same place,

⁶ Engrave.

⁸ Requite.

⁹ Behaved, demeaned, themselves so well to me.

⁷ Hovered, abode.

Where each one seeks with malice and with strife

To thrust down others into foul disgrace,
Himself to raise : and he doth soonest rise
That best can handle his deceitful wit
In subtle shifts, and finest sleights devise,
Either by aland'ring his well-deem'd name
Through leasings lewd¹ and feign'd forgery ;
Or else by breeding him some blot of blame,
By creeping close into his secrecy ;
To which him needs a guileful hollow heart,
Mask'd with fair dissembling courtesy,
A flid² tongue, furnish'd with terms of art,
No art of school, but courtiers' schoolery.
For arts of school have there small countenance,
Counted but toys to busy idle brains ;
And there professors find small maintenance,
But to be instruments of others' gains.
Nor is there place for any gentle wit,
Unless to please itself it can apply ;
But shoulder'd is, or out of door quite shut,
As base, or blunt, unmeet for melody.
For each man's worth is measur'd by his weed,³
As harts by horns, or asses by their ears :
Yet asses be not all whose ears exceed,
Nor yet all harts that horns the highest bears.
For highest looks have not the highest mind,
Nor haughty words most full of highest thoughts ;

But are like bladders blown up with wind,
That, being prick'd, do vanish into naughts.
Ev'n such is all their vaunted vanity,
Naught else but smoke, that fumeth soon away :
Such is their glory, that in simple eye
Seem greatest when their garments are most gay.

So they themselves for praise of fools do sell,
And all their wealth for painting on a wall ;
With price whereof they buy a golden bell,
And purchase highest rooms in bow'r and hall :
While single Truth and simple Honesty
Do wander up and down despis'd of all ;
Their plain attire such glorious gallantry
Disdains so much, that none them in doth call."

"Ah! Colin," then said Hobbinol, "the blame

Which thou imputeest is too general,
As if not any gentle wit of name,
Nor honest mind, might there be found at all.
For well I wot, since I myself was there,
To wait on Lobbin⁴ (Lobbin well thou knew'st),
Full many worthy ones then waiting were,
As ever else in prince's court thou view'st.
Of which among you many yet remain,
Whose names I cannot readily now guess :
Those that poor suitors' papers do retain,
And those that skill of medicine profess,
And those that do to Cynthia expound
The leden⁵ of strange languages in charge :
For Cynthia doth in sciences abound,
And gives to their professors stipends large.

¹ Wicked lies.

² Smooth.

³ Dress.

⁴ Supposed to mean the Earl of Leicester.

⁵ Dialect. See note 28, page 119.

⁶ Blame.

⁷ For the most part.

⁸ Misdoing.

⁹ Allot, give up.

Therefore unjustly thou dost wite⁶ them all,
For that which thou mislikedst in a few."

"Blame is," quoth he, "more blameless general,

Than that which private errors doth pursue ;
For well I wot that there amongst them be
Full many persons of right worthy parts,
Both for report of spotless honesty,
And for profession of all learn'd arts,
Whose praise hereby no whit impaired is,
Though blame do light on those that faulty be ;
For all the rest do most-what⁷ fare amiss,
And yet their own misfaring⁸ will not see :
For either they be puffed up with pride,
Or fraught with envy, that their galls do swell,
Or they their days to idleness divide,⁹
Or drown'd lie in pleasure's wasteful well,
In which like moldwarps nousing¹⁰ still they lurk,

Unmindful of chief parts of manliness ;
And do themselves, for want of other work,
Vain votaries of laxy Love profess,
Whose service high so basely they ensue,¹¹
That Cupid's self of them ashamed is,
And, must'ring all his men in Venus' view,
Denies them quite for servitors of his."

"And is Love then," said Corylas, "once known

In Court, and his sweet lore profess'd there ?
I ween'd sure he was our god alone,
And only wou'd¹² in fields and forests here."

"Not so," quoth he ; "Love most aboundeth there ;

For all the walls and windows there are writ
All full of love, and love, and love my dear,
And all their talk and study is of it.
Nor any there doth brave or valiant seem,
Unless that some gay mistress' badge he bears :
Nor any one himself doth aught esteem,
Unless he swim in love up to the ears.
But they of Love, and of his sacred lore¹³
(As it should be), all otherwise devise
Than we poor shepherds are accustom'd here,
And him do sue and serve all otherwise.
For with lewd speeches, and licentious deeds,
His mighty mysteries they do profane,
And use his idle name to other needs,
But as a complement for courting vain.
So him they do not serve as they profess,
But make him serve to them for sordid uses :
Ah! my dread Lord, that dost liege hearts possess,

Avenge thyself on them for their abuses !
But we poor shepherds, whether rightly so,
Or through our rudeness into error led,
Do make religion how we rashly go¹⁴
To serve that god, that is so greatly dread ;¹⁵
For him the greatest of the gods we deem,
Born without sire or couples of one kind ;
For Venus' self doth solely couples seem,
Both male and female through commixture join'd :

¹⁰ Like moles burrowing.

¹¹ Follow.

¹² Dwelt.

¹³ Love.

¹⁴ That is, we have such true religion, we so truly fear the god, that we are very careful how we serve him.

¹⁵ Dracded.

Beware therefore, ye grooms, I read,¹ betimes,
How rashly blame of Rosalind ye raise."

"Ah! shepherds," then said Colin, "ye ne-
weet²

How great a guilt upon your heads ye draw,
To make so bold a doom,³ with words unmeet,
Of thing celestial which ye never saw.
For she is not like as the other crew
Of shepherds' daughters which amongst you be,
But of divine regard and heav'nly hue,
Excelling all that ever ye did see.
Not then to her, that scorn'd thing so base,
But to myself the blame that look'd so high:
So high her thoughts as she herself have place,
And loathe each lowly thing with lofty eye.
Yet so much grace let her vouchsafe to grant

Yet that I may her honour paravant,⁴
And praise her worth, though far my wit above.
Such grace shall be some guerdon⁵ for the grief
And long affliction which I have endur'd:
Such grace sometimes shall give me some relief,
And ease of pain which cannot be recur'd.
And ye, my fellow shepherds, which do see
And hear the languors of my too long dying,
Unto the world for ever witness be,
That here I die, naught to the world denying
This simple trophy of her great conquest."
So having ended, he from ground did rise;
And after him uprose eke all the rest:
All loth to part, but that the glooming skies
Warn'd them to draw their bleating flocks to
rest.

AMORETTI; OR SONNETS.*

[1595.]

I.

HAPPY, ye leaves! when as those lily hands,
Which hold my life in their dead-doing might,
Shall handle you, and hold in love's soft bands,
Like captives trembling at the victor's sight.
And happy lines! on which, with starry light,
Those laming eyes will deign sometimes to look,
And read the sorrows of my dying sprite,
Written with tears in heart's alone-bleeding
book.

And happy rhymes! bath'd in the sacred brook
Of Helicon, whence she deriv'd is;
When ye behold that Angel's blessed look,
My soul's long-lack'd food, my heaven's bliss;
Leaves, lines, and rhymes, seek her to please
alone,
Whom if ye please, I care for other none!

IV.

New Year, forth looking out of Janus' gate,
Doth seem to promise hope of new delight:
And, bidding th' old adieu, his pass'd date
Bids all old thoughts to die in dumpish⁷ sprite:
And, calling forth out of sad Winter's night
Fresh Love, that long hath slept in cheerless
bow'r,

Wills him awake, and soon about him dight
His wanton wings and darts of deadly pow'r.
For lusty Spring now in his timely hour
Is ready to come forth, him to receive;

¹ Counsel.

² Judgment.

³ Recompense.

* Spenser's "Amoretti," published in 1595, along with the "Epithalamion," are a series of eighty-eight sonnets, reflecting the fortunes of the poet's courtship of his second love and only wife—an Irish lady, regarding whom nothing positive is known; for Spenser's own hints as to the lowliness of her birth, both in the sonnets and in "The Faerie Queen" (canto x., book vi.,

⁴ Ye know not.

⁵ Publicly; before all others.

And warns the Earth with diverse-colour'd flow'r
To deck herself, and her fair mantle weave.
Then you, fair flower! in whom fresh youth
doth reign,
Prepare yourself new love to entertain.

IX.

Long-while I sought to what I might compare
Those pow'rful eyes, which lighten my dark
sprite:

Yet find I naught on earth, to which I dare
Resemble th' image of their goodly light.
Not to the sun; for they do shine by night;
Nor to the moon; for they are chang'd never;
Nor to the stars; for they have purer sight;
Nor to the fire; for they consume not ever;
Nor to the lightning; for they still persevere;
Nor to the diamond; for they are more tender;
Nor unto crystal; for naught may them sever;
Nor unto glass; such baseness might offend her.
Then to the Maker's self they likest be,
Whose light doth lighten all that here we see.

XV.

Ye tradeful merchants, that with weary toil
Do seek most precious things to make your
gain,

And both the Indies of their treasure spoil,
What needeth you to seek so far in vain?
For lo! my Love doth in herself contain
All this world's riches that may far be found:

where she is introduced as a fourth Grace) are no more to be taken *en pied de la lettre*, than the similar indications regarding Rosalind, in "The Shepherd's Calendar." The Sonnets begin about the close of 1592, and extend to nearly the date of the poet's marriage, in June 1594. Of the eighty-eight, thirty-one have been selected for the present edition, representing as fully as possible the various phases of the poet's passion and love-fortunes.

⁷ Sad.

Sometimes I joy when glad occasion fits,
And mask in mirth like to a comedy :
Soon after, when my joy to sorrow flits,
I wail, and make my woes a tragedy.
Yet she, beholding me with constant eye,
Delights not in my mirth, nor rues my smart :
But, when I laugh, she mocks ; and, when I cry,
She laughs, and hardens evermore her heart.
What then can move her ? if nor mirth, nor
moan,
She is no woman, but a senseless stone.

LV.

So oft as I her beauty do behold,
And therewith do her cruelty compare,
I marvel of what substance was the mould
The which her made at once so cruel fair.
Not earth ; for her high thoughts more heav'nly
are :
Not water ; for her love doth burn like fire :
Not air ; for she is not so light or rare :
Not fire ; for she doth freeze with faint desire.
Then needs another element inquire
Whereof she might be made ; that is, the sky.
For to the heav'n her haughty looks aspire ;
And eke her love is pure immortal high.
Then, 'since to heav'n ye liken'd are the best,
Be like in mercy as in all the rest.

LVI.

Fair be ye sure, but cruel and unkind,
As is a tiger, that with greediness
Hunts after blood ; when he by chance doth find
A feeble beast, doth felly him oppress.
Fair be ye sure, but proud and pitiless,
As is a storm, that all things doth prostrate ;
Finding a tree alone all comfortless,
Beats on it strongly, it to ruinate.
Fair be ye sure, but hard and obstinate,
As is a rock amidst the raging floods ;
'Gainst which a ship, of succour desolate,
Doth suffer wreck both of herself and goods.
That ship, that tree, and that same beast, am I,
Whom ye do wreck, do ruin, and destroy.

LVII.

They, that in course of heav'nly spheres are
skill'd,
To ev'ry planet point his sundry year,
In which her circle's voyage is fulfill'd ;
As Mars in threescore years doth run his sphere.
So, since the wing'd god his planet clear
Began in me to move, one year is spent :
The which doth longer unto me appear
Than all those forty which my life out-went.
Then by that count, which lovers' books invent,
The sphere of Cupid forty years contains :
Which I have wasted in long languishment,
That seem'd the longer for my greater pains.
But let my Love's fair planet short her ways,
This year ensuing, or else short my days.

LVIII.

The weary year his race now having run,

¹ By this Sonnet the poet's birth has been ascertained to have taken place in 1552 ; for these lines were written in 1593, and in that year, he says, he was forty-one years old. As the new year is mentioned in the next

The new begins his compass² course anew :
With show of morning mild he hath begun,
Betokening peace and plenty to ensue.
So let us, which this change of weather view,
Change eke our minds, and former lives amend ;
The old year's sins forepast let us eschew,
And fly the faults with which we did offend.
Then shall the new year's joy forth freshly send
Into the glooming world his gladsome ray :
And all these storms, which now his beauty
blend,³

Shall turn to calms, and timely clear away.
So, likewise, Love ! cheer you your heavy sprite,
And change old year's annoy to new delight.

LXIII.

After long storms and tempests' sad assay,
Which hardly I endured heretofore,
In dread of death, and dangerous dismay,
With which my silly bark was toss'd sore,
I do at length descry the happy shore,
In which I hope ere long for to arrive :
Fair soil it seems from far, and fraught with
store

Of all that dear and dainty is alive.
Most happy he ! that can at last achieve⁴
The joyous safety of so sweet a rest ;
Whose least delight sufficeth to deprive
Remembrance of all pains which him oppress.
All pains are nothing in respect of this ;
All sorrows short that gain eternal bliss.

LXIV.

Coming to kiss her lips (such grace I found),
Me seem'd, I smell'd a garden of sweet flow'rs,
That dainty odours from them threw around,
For damsels fit to deck their lovers' bow'rs.
Her lips did smell like unto gilliflow'rs ;
Her ruddy cheeks, like unto roses red ;
Her snowy brows, like budded bellamours ;
Her lovely eyes, like pinks but newly spread ;
Her goodly bosom, like a strawberry bed ;
Her neck, like to a bunch of columbines ;
Her breast, like lilies ere their leaves be shed ;
Her nipples, like young blossom'd jessamines :
Such fragrant flow'rs do give most odorous
smell ;
But her sweet odour did them all excel.

LXV.

The doubt which ye misdeem, fair Love, is vain,
That fondly fear to lose your liberty ;
When, losing one, two liberties ye gain,
And make him bond that bondage erst⁵ did fly.
Sweet be the bands the which true love doth tie
Without constraint, or dread of any ill :
The gentle bird feels no captivity
Within her cage, but sings, and feeds her fill.
There pride dare not approach, nor discord spill⁶
The league 'twixt them that loyal love hath
bound :
But simple truth, and mutual good will,
Seeks, with sweet peace, to save each other's
wound :

Sonnet but one, the date of the poet's birth was probably late in 1552.

² Round.

³ Obscure.

⁴ Formerly.

⁵ Achieve, attain.

⁶ Destroy.

By Love himself, and in his garden plac'd.
Her breast that table was, so richly spread ;
My thoughts the guests, which would thereon
have fed.

LXXX.

After so long a race as I have run
Through Faery Land, which those six books
compile,¹

Give leave to rest me, being half fordone,
And gather to myself new breath a while.
Then, as a steed refresh'd after toil,
Out of my prison I will break anew ;
And stoutly will that second work assail,²
With strong endeavour and attention due.
Till then give leave to me in pleasant mew³
To sport my Muse, and sing my Love's sweet
praise ;

The contemplation of whose heav'nly hue
My spirit to a higher pitch will raise.
But let her praises yet be low and mean,
Fit for the handmaid of the Faery Queen.

LXXXI.

Fair is my Love, when her fair golden hairs
With the loose wind ye waving chance to mark ;
Fair, when the rose in her red cheeks appears ;
Or in her eyes the fire of love does spark.
Fair, when her breast, like a rich laden bark,
With precious merchandise, she forth doth lay ;
Fair, when that cloud of pride, which oft doth
dark

Her goodly light, with smiles she drives away.
But fairest she, whenso she doth display
The gate with pearls and rubies richly dight,
Through which her words so wise do make their
way

To hear the message of her gentle sprite.

The rest be works of Nature's wonderment ;
But this the work of heart's astonishment.

LXXXII.

Joy of my life ! full off for loving you
I bless my lot, that was so lucky plac'd :
But then the more your own mishap I rue,
That are so much by so mean love embas'd.
For, had the equal⁴ heav'n's so much you grac'd
In this as in the rest, ye might invent
Some heav'nly wit, whose verse could have
enchas'd

Your glorious name in golden monument.
But since ye deign'd so goodly to relent
To me your thrall, in whom is little worth,
That little, that I am, shall all be spent
In setting your immortal praises forth :
Whose lofty argument, uplifting me,
Shall lift you up unto a high degree.

LXXXIII.

Let not one spark of filthy lustful fire
Break out, that may her sacred peace molest ;
Nor one light glance of sensual desire
Attempt to work her gentle mind's unrest :
But pure affections bred in spotless breast,
And modest thoughts breath'd from well-
temper'd sprites,
Go visit her in her chaste bower of rest,
Accompanied with angelic delights.
There fill yourself with those most joyous
sights,
The which myself could never yet attain :
But speak no word to her of these sad plights
Which her too constant stiffness doth constrain.
Only behold her rare perfection,
And bless your fortune's fair election.⁵

EPITHALAMION.⁶

[1595.]

Ye learn'd Sisters, which have oftentimes
Been to me aiding, others to adorn
Whom ye thought worthy of your graceful
rhymes,
That ev'n the greatest did not greatly scorn
To hear their names sung in your simple lays,
But joy'd in their praise ;

¹ In the thirty-third Sonnet, Spenser, addressing his friend Lodowick Briskett, had apologised for the great wrong done to Queen Elizabeth in "not finishing her Queen of Faery, that might enlarge her living praises, dead;" the poet's excuse being, that his wit was "lost through troublous fit of a proud love." That Sonnet was probably written in the spring of 1593; the eightieth in the spring of 1594.

² Absolve, discharge; he refers to the second half of his great poem.

³ Retirement.

⁴ Just.

⁵ Five Sonnets complete the series; the first defends

And when ye list your own mishaps to mourn,
Which death, or love, or fortune's wreck did
raise,
Your string could soon to sadder tenor turn,
And teach the woods and waters to lament
Your doleful dreariment :
Now lay those sorrowful complaints aside ;

the poet against the charge that his praises of his mistress are overstrained; the second vehemently dooms to "all the plagues and horrid pains of hell" some "venomous tongue" that has stirred in his true love coals of fire, and broken his own sweet peace; and the other three bewail a temporary withdrawal of the light of his mistress's presence. But this parting wail is quickly drowned in the jubilant melody of the "Epithalamion."

⁶ Written in honour of the poet's own marriage, which took place on St Barnabas' Day, the 11th (now the 22d) of June, 1594.

That all the woods shall answer, and their echo ring.

Hark! how the minstrels glee to shrill aloud
Their merry music that resounds from far,
The pipe, the tabor, and the trembling croud,¹
That well agree withouten breach or jar.
But, most of all, the damsels do delight,
When they their timbrels smite,
And thereunto do dance and carol sweet,
That all the senses they do ravish quite;
The while the boys run up and down the street,
Crying aloud with strong confused noise,
As if it were one voice,
"Hymen, Hymen, Hymen!" they do shout;
That even to the heav'n's their shouting shrill
Doth reach, and all the firmament doth fill;
To which the people standing all about,
As in approbation, do thereto applaud,
And loud advance her laud;
And evermore they "Hymen, Hymen!" sing,
That all the woods them answer, and their echo ring.

Lo! where she comes along with portly pace,
Like Phoebe, from her chamber of the East,
Arising forth to run her mighty race,
Clad all in white, that seems a virgin best.
So well it her beseeems, that ye would ween
Some angel she had been.

Her long loose yellow locks, like golden wire,
Sprinkled with pearl, and pearling flowers
between,

Do like a golden mantle her attire;
And, being crown'd with a garland green,
Seem like some maiden queen.
Her modest eyes, abash'd to behold
So many gazers as on her do stare,
Upon the lowly ground affix'd are;
Nor dare lift up her countenance too bold,
But blush to hear her praises sung so loud,
So far from being proud.
Nathless do ye still loud her praises sing,
That all the woods may answer, and your echo ring.

Tell me, ye merchants' daughters, did ye see
So fair a creature in your town before;
So sweet, so lovely, and so mild as she,
Adorn'd with beauty's grace and virtue's store?
Her goodly eyes like sapphires shining bright,
Her forehead ivory white,
Her cheeks like apples which the sun hath
rudded,²

Her lips like cherries charming men to bite,
Her breast like to a bowl of cream uncrudded,³
Her paps like lilies budded,
Her snowy neck like to a marble tower;
And all her body like a palace fair,
Ascending up with many a stately stair.

To honor
Why sta
Upon he
While y
To which
ri

¹ Violin.

The inward beauty of her lively sprite,
Garnish'd with heav'nly gifts of high degree,—
Much more then would ye wonder at that sight,
And stand astonish'd like to those which read
Medusa's massful⁴ head.

There dwells sweet Love, and constant Chastity,
Unspotted Faith, and comely Womanhead,
Regard of Honour, and mild Modesty;
There Virtue reigns as queen in royal throne,
And giveth laws alone,
The which the base affections do obey,
And yield their services unto her will;
Nor thought of things uncomely ever may
Thereto approach, to tempt her mind to ill.
Had ye once seen these her celestial treasures,
And unrevealed pleasures,
Then would ye wonder, and her praises sing,
That all the woods should answer, and your
echo ring.

Open the temple gates unto my love,
Open them wide that she may enter in,
And all the posts adorn as doth behove,
And all the pillars deck with garlands trim,
For to receive this saint with honour due,
That cometh in to you.
With trembling steps, and humble reverence,
She cometh in, before th' Almighty's view:
Of her, ye virgins, learn obedience,
When so ye come into these holy places,
To humble your proud faces:
Bring her up to th' high altar, that she may
The sacred ceremonies there partake,
The which do endless matrimony make;
And let the roaring organs loudly play
The praises of the Lord in lively notes;
The while, with hollow throats,
The choristers the joyous anthem sing,
That all the woods may answer, and their echo ring.

Behold, while she before the altar stands,
Hearing the holy priest that to her speaks,
And bleaseth her with his two happy hands,
How the red roses flush up in her cheeks,
And the pure snow with goodly vermedl stain,
Like crimson dy'd in grain:
That ev'n the angels, which continually
About the sacred altar do remain,
Forget their service, and about her fly,
Oft peeping in her face, that seems more fair
The more they on it stare.
But her sad eyes, still fasten'd on the ground,
Are govern'd with goodly modesty,
That suffers not one look to glance awry,
Which may let in a little thought unsound.
Why blush ye, Love, to give to me your hand,
The pledge of all our band!
Sing, ye sweet angels, Alleluia sing!

The while a hundred little wing'd Loves,
Like diverse-feather'd doves,
Shall fly and flutter round about the bed,
And in the secret dark, that none reproveth,
Their pretty stealths shall work, and snares
shall spread

To flich away sweet snatches of delight,
Conceal'd through covert night.

Ye *sans* of Venus, play your sports at will !
For greedy Pleasure, careless of your toys,
Thinks more upon her Paradise of joys,
Than what ye do, albeit good or ill.

All night, therefore, attend your merry play,
For it will soon be day :

Now none doth hinder you, that say or sing ;
Nor will the woods now answer, nor your echo
ring.

Who is the same, which at my window peeps ?
Or whose is that fair face that shines so bright ?
Is it not Cynthia, she that never sleeps,
But walks about high heaven all the night ?
Oh ! fairest goddess, do thou not envy
My love with me to spy :
For thou likewise didst love, though now un-
thought,

And for a fleece of wool, which privily
The Latmian shepherd¹ once unto thee brought,
His pleasures with thee wrought.
Therefore to us be favourable now ;
And since of women's labours thou hast charge,
And generation goodly dost enlarge,²
Incline thy will t' effect our wishful vow,
And the chaste womb inform with timely seed,
That may our comfort breed :

Till which we cease our hopeful hap to sing ;
Nor let the woods us answer, nor our echo ring.

And thou, great Juno ! which with awful might
The laws of wedlock still dost patronise ;
And the religion of the faith first plight
With sacred rites hast taught to solemnise ;
And eke for comfort often call'd art

Of women in their smart ;³

Eternally bind thou this lovely hand,
And all thy blessings unto us impart.
And thou, glad Genius !⁴ in whose gentle hand
The bridal bow'r and genial bed remain,

Without blemish or stain ;
And the sweet pleasures of their love's delight
With secret aid dost succour and supply,
Till they bring forth the fruitful progeny ;
Send us the timely fruit of this same night.

And thou, fair Hebe ! and thou, Hymen free !
Grant that it may so be.

Till which we cease your farther praise to sing ;
Nor any woods shall answer, nor your echo ring.

And ye, high heav'n's, the temple of the gods,
In which a thousand torches flaming bright
Do burn, that to us wretched earthly clods
In dreadful darkness lend desired light ;
And all ye Pow'rs which in the same remain,
More than we men can feign !⁴
Pour out your blessing on us plenteously,
And happy influence upon us rain,
That we may raise a large posterity,
Which from the earth, which they may long
possess

With lasting happiness,
Up to your haughty palaces may mount ;
And, for the guardian of their glorious merit,
May heav'nly tabernacles there inherit,
Of blessed saints for to increase the count.
So let us rest, sweet love, in hope of this,
And cease till then our timely joys to sing :
The woods no more us answer, nor our echo
ring !

*Song ! made in lieu of many ornaments,
With which my love should duly have been deck'd,
Which cutting off through hasty accidents,
Ye would not stay your due time to expect,
But promis'd both to recompense ;
Be unto her a goodly ornament,
And for short time an endless monument !*

¹ Endymion.

² See note 17, page 87.

³ See "The Faerie Queen," canto vi., book III., page 424 (note 8).

⁴ Imagine.

THE END.

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